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# BISMARCK'S PEN

The Life of Heinrich Abeken

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MRS C.E. BARRETT-LENNARD



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BISMARCK'S PEN





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Heinrich Abeken

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# BISMARCK'S PEN

The Life of Heinrich Abeken

EDITED FROM HIS LETTERS AND JOURNALS BY  
HIS WIFE

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION

BY

MRS. CHARLES EDWARD BARRETT-LENNARD

AND

M. W. HOPER

*WITH PORTRAITS*

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## TRANSLATORS' NOTE

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# BISMARCK'S PEN

## BOOK I

### CHAPTER I

#### CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

1809-1828

“Ob Form und Wort auch werde alt,  
Der Sinn gilt heut, der gestern galt,  
Jung bleibt des Geistes Leben.  
Und was aus rechtem Herzen kommt,  
Das spricht zum Herzen auch und frommt,  
Wird Fried' and Ruhe geben.”—ABEKEN, April 11, 1829.

IN a lovely part of Westphalia, surrounded by hills, there lies in a valley on the left bank of the Hase, the old-world fortified town of Osnabrück. Here, where his forefathers had for centuries lived, Heinrich Johann Wilhelm Rudolf Abeken was born on August 19, 1809, at a time of deep humiliation and bitter distress for Germany. His father, Christian Wilhelm Abeken, had, more from stress of circumstance than from inclination, taken to trade, for the sudden death of his father made him the mainstay of his mother and younger brothers and sisters, while he himself was still in his early youth. In later days he became a great benefactor to Osnabrück, enjoyed universal esteem, and was nominated Senator, giving up business so that he might devote all his energies to the town. Heinrich's mother, Benedicta, died in 1814, falling into ill-health after the birth of her daughter, Bernardine.

The relations between Heinrich Abeken and his uncles and aunts was one of warm affection, and his uncle, Bernhard Rudolf,<sup>1</sup> the distinguished Goethe scholar and editor

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<sup>1</sup> Rudolf Abeken, *From the Life of Goethe*, Berlin, 1845, and *Goethe in 1771-1775*, second edition, Hanover, 1865. Rudolf Abeken had also been tutor to Schiller's children for some time.

of Moser's Works, exercised a great influence over him and in the development of his character.

Like most of the burghers of Osnabrück, Wilhelm Abeken had a large garden outside the town, in addition to the small one belonging to his house in town. Thither the family would often go and take their meals in the open air, and every expedition of this kind was a festival to Heinrich. His great-grandfather had had a picture painted, in the summer-house, "Jacob wrestling with the Angel;" and the text beneath it, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me," was all his life a source of strength to him, for he too wrestled from a child, in joy and sorrow, until the end. The only large room in his father's house was the family sitting-room, where each member brought his work, and Abeken used to say that this had been of great service to him, for it taught him to concentrate his mind on his own work, so that afterwards, both in the office and in travelling, he was able to work under the most difficult conditions.

In 1815 his uncle Rudolf was appointed to the Evangelical Gymnasium at Osnabrück, which he preferred to better appointments, and Heinrich found in him a good and affectionate teacher, and in his aunt a motherly friend,<sup>1</sup> who, despite many domestic cares of her own, looked after the bodily and spiritual welfare of the nephew and niece. She was an instance of what a delicate woman of strong character and unflagging energy, combined with intellectual gifts, can do for others.

The brother and sister, Heinrich and Bernardine, were very different from each other, both physically and mentally. Bernardine had inherited her mother's slight figure, large brown eyes, high forehead, and dark hair; she was delicate, thoughtful, and rather slow and dreamy. Heinrich's somewhat broad forehead, clear blue eyes, and fair curls were inherited from his father. They were alike in their great affection for one another and for their father, and in the genuine goodness of heart, and sunny gaiety and light-heartedness with which they entered into the joys of life.

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<sup>1</sup> Christiane von Wurmb, Lady-in-Waiting to the Princess Regent of Rudolstadt.



Heinrich was not tall for his age, and was often the smallest in his class, but he was a sturdy lad, strong and muscular, and, as his aunt said, would not easily get knocked about. He was quick-witted and impetuous, and did everything eagerly and rapidly. His first lessons began when he was five years old, and his teacher praised his memory and the way in which he learned his lessons. His aunt, writing of him, says: "He leaves all books, and keeps to the Bible stories, but he says none of them are as beautiful as in the Bible itself, and he goes on reading it." He made rapid progress at the Gymnasium, showing talent and a desire to learn. His iron determination to aim at goodness often cost him a struggle, but so much the more did he strive after it. His father affectionately followed the bent of his son's inclinations, and left him entirely free to decide upon his career. He rejoiced at his striving after a larger sphere of activity, and allowed him to continue his studies in Prussia, which he regarded as the centre, even then, of the Germany to be. So he took leave of the Gymnasium in the spring of 1817, with a speech on Justus Meyer,<sup>1</sup> and on April 21, he left his home for the first time to plunge alone into the sea of houses, Berlin.

He wrote to his father after his arrival: "It is hard and painful to leave the dear, quiet home, particularly when one has been as happy there as I have been. This feeling of home one can only have in a town like Osnabrück, where one's home is the house of one's forefathers; I pity those who have not got it."

Young people were brought up simply in those days, Berlin was small, and Heinrich himself, although his father sent him an ample allowance, was modest and unpretentious in outward matters, and indeed always remained so. He only paid seven thalers a month for his two rooms in Dorotheenstrasse, and but four or five for his dinners each month. The pleasant life among the families of his acquaintance helped to make social intercourse easy for the shy young man, and he was soon received into family circles as though he were a necessary part of the household, which, indeed, he was, for with the *Hausfreund* of that

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<sup>1</sup> 1720-1794. Osnabrück History, 1868.

time there were such intimate relations of give and take that one could hardly tell which of the two parties gave or took the most. His extraordinary talents, the many-sidedness of his interests, and the quickness of his wits, made it possible for him to combine philological and philosophical studies with his special study, theology, and to acquire an intimate knowledge of art, literature, and modern languages. This brought him into touch with Neander,<sup>1</sup> Meinike,<sup>2</sup> August Broeckh,<sup>3</sup> and others. He also made the acquaintance of Bunsen,<sup>4</sup> Humboldt,<sup>5</sup> and Schleiermacher.<sup>6</sup> He felt strongly attracted to Bunsen from the first, and told his father that his heart's desire was to meet Bunsen in Italy. "Oh, I greatly long to go to Italy," he said, and it was not long before this desire was actually fulfilled.

He heard the greater part of Humboldt's lectures, and in describing him to his father he wrote: "Humboldt is the most modest man in the world. He is not at all reserved with his treasures, and is said to tell people a great deal when meeting them socially, and withal in the most charming manner. He really has won his palms without being spoilt, and without being changed."

He attended Schleiermacher's lectures with extreme regularity, although not quite agreeing with him. He considered him the only scholar of the Berlin University who possessed any personal influence, not merely by what he taught, but by what he was. It was characteristic of Abeken to form his own opinions and only abandon them when he had found better ones. Writing to his uncle Rudolf in July, he says:—

<sup>1</sup> Johann August Wilhelm Neander, 1789–1850; from 1813 Professor of Theology in Berlin.

<sup>2</sup> August Meinike, 1790–1870; classical philologist. 1826–1857, Director of the Joachimsthal Gymnasium, Berlin.

<sup>3</sup> August Boeckh, 1785–1867; Professor of Classical Philology and archæologist; famous antiquarian.

<sup>4</sup> Christian Karl Josias, Freiherr von Bunsen, 1791–1860; statesman and scholar; from 1818 at the Legation at Rome; Minister at Berne, 1839; 1841–1854, Minister in London; 1857, appointed to the Upper House, Prussia, and created Freiherr.

<sup>5</sup> Alexander, Freiherr von HumLoldt, 1769–1857. In Berlin from 1827.

<sup>6</sup> Friedrich Ernst Daniel Schleiermacher, 1768–1834. Pastor and professor from 1810 in Berlin.

“Schleiermacher’s lectures on the principles of theology are a great pleasure to me, and are very exciting, for the most important questions come under discussion, and are dealt with in a very spiritual way. I have a great respect for Schleiermacher, although I differ from many of his fundamental ideas. He keeps very exactly to the formulas of theology and gives distinct prominence to the necessary internal connection between them. It is true that he makes very severe demands sometimes on theologians, which, however, I cannot regard as otherwise than legitimate. He wishes them to learn not only Hebrew but Aramaic.”

Although the young student devoted himself eagerly and successfully to theology, he by no means neglected the study of philosophy, but in his eyes it was far inferior to theology. “I respect philosophy,” he writes to his uncle, “but I cannot bear the view of those who give it the highest place, neither can I bear the philosophic systems which necessarily are sources of one-sidedness and party feeling.”

He tried to show how philosophy and religion are limited by one another, in numbers of his letters, and they contain discussions which reveal the acuteness and precision of his judgment, and above all the finest testimony to the implicit belief of his soul.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“BERLIN, *March 27, 1828.*

“I am willing that philosophy should be systemised, but when it comes to applying the same method to religion—well, I have learned the result of that from dogmatics. A system is, anyway, only applicable to doctrine and science, namely, the science of thought; but religion, so far as I can make out, has nothing whatever to do with it. Religion does not come into the province of knowledge at all; one can scarcely apply to it the term of truth—that is, so far as it is a question of the truth of thought.

“Religion and piety seem to me very near akin; what we call religiousness (on which religion properly speaking depends, and not on dogmatic propositions), the ancients called piety. So Goethe also appears to regard it in his *Wanderjahre*, where he attributes the development of reverence—and reverence

certainly is piety—to religion ; there is no question at all of knowledge connected with reverence—that is, knowledge of thought. This seems to me almost the view Goethe had in his younger days, as he tells us in his life ; in knowledge it is a question of *what* one knows, in faith it is not *what*, but *whether* one believes. One must not, indeed, here conceive of faith in its most usual significance—that is, as merely belief in authority—but as the true inner religion of the mind, the conception of ourselves and the world as created by God, as the direct consciousness of God Himself, as piety. I do not believe that if a person, owing to his more limited spiritual powers, has a rather more material idea of God than another, that he is, for all that, less pious, or need have less faith, nor that we need consider him, from a religious standpoint, as inferior to the other ; at least it seems to me that the early Christians, indeed many of the Apostles, had material ideas of God which we no longer have ; that they thought of God, for example, far more as a Person than we do ; but I cannot, by any means, say that they were less pious, less Christian, or had less faith. The object of religion is not the knowledge of God, but to console, sanctify, and elevate the inward man. Thus faith is one with love, and it is the fellowship into which we must enter with Christ, not merely a belief that Jesus lived and died, repeated on the word of the preacher—that would not be of any use. The saving belief in Christ can only be the inner fellowship. . . . Philosophy regards the world as something foreign to man, opposed to him ; this contradiction it tries to do away with by Thought or Idea, as Hegel says, by which man recognises himself in nature. This contradiction of nature and man is there, and the endeavour of philosophy to accommodate it by Thought may be capable of proof, but it is an endeavour, and can never be accomplished.

“ But in religion this contradiction is removed by love, by faith, in which we conceive of the world and ourselves as created by God Himself in our hearts. To this point philosophy can never come by thinking, just because God cannot be thought out. Therefore philosophy is nothing without religion, but religion can get on quite well without philosophy. It was rather the religious sense too, which constituted the intrinsic worth of all ancient religions, and was properly the power which elevated and sanctified the human heart ; in this sense we may call Homer and all like him pious and religious ; he certainly had God within him more than many who presume to know a vast deal about God and things divine. In every religion it is



this element which is of essential moment ; but it shows itself in its purest and clearest form in Christianity ; in Christ, God appeared in most living form, and was revealed through Him ; and so in those who believe on Him must religion show itself most powerfully and gloriously, and their sanctification be accomplished. And Atonement and Redemption mean just this, that imperfect and finite man lacks that presence of God, and so both he and his whole life are disjointed and finite."

*To his Uncle, Rudolf Abeken.*

" BERLIN, May 18, 1828.

" . . . The philosophers are certainly right in saying that our time is the time of subjectivity and the Ego, and that we have got away from the simple pious faith of ancient days. For our Ego shows itself everywhere ; the whole of philosophy depends on the Ego ; Schelling says in a lecture upon the history of philosophy, that Fichte laid the foundation-stone of philosophy with the Ego, and that then, in order not to sink into the depths of subjectivity, there was nothing left for him but to conceive of the Ego transcendently (if only the Ego had been got rid of by this transcendentalism ! ) ; in religion also, there are few who still have the old, simple belief, just because one believes ; rather how often, and by just the most able theologians and divines, is it said, We believe in God because He is in *us*. We must find Him in *ourselves*—they always appeal to our own testimony. True, our freedom depends on this ; but is man born to such an absolute freedom of his Ego ? I hardly believe so. This predominance of the Ego often strikes me as terrible ; I think that a religion whose fundamental principle is piety, which last is now so utterly and entirely lacking, and especially the Christian religion, whose fundamental principle is love, would be able to fight against it and conquer. As an Eastern poet very beautifully says—

" ' For wheresoever Love doth rise,  
There Self, the gloomy despot, dies ;  
Oh, let him perish in the night,  
And breathe thou free in morning light.' "

Abeken writes to his father as follows about his uncle Ludwig, who died young : <sup>1</sup>—

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<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Abeken, 1793–1826, professor at the Royal Gymnasium.

“When I walk through the streets of Berlin near his dwelling, and think how desolate, how dead it all is to me now, and how bright, living, and homelike it might have been. . . . But I will not lament. The Bible has been a great consolation to me during these days. I read the raising of Lazarus in the Gospel of St. John ; can there be anything more beautiful than this one story ? Never did I feel so much as to-day the meaning of these simple words : ‘ Jesus wept.’ It is such a beautiful thing, it sanctifies our bitter grief over this transitory earthly life, to see the Divine One Himself weeping over it. Who can be ashamed of tears when Jesus Himself shed them ? His tears resolve themselves into the prayer of thanksgiving to His Father : ‘ Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me.’ There is something indescribably strong and grand in this thanksgiving before there is a visible sign of the prayer being granted ; it is the right of faith, of which Jesus says : ‘ What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall receive them.’ I think that to him who could pray with gladness such as this and give thanks before the granting of the prayer, all things must be possible. . . .”

Abeken felt sorrow so deeply and sincerely that no human soul was ever replaced in his affections. How he could rejoice with them that rejoice, many know, and also how he wept with those that weep. How deeply he felt his own sorrows hardly any one perceived in later years. And he entered into the pleasures of life with zest. In the winter of 1827-1828 he fully appreciated the social life of Berlin, and had the most lively interest in the pleasures of art which were offered there. Soon after the New Year, he became on Boeckh's proposal, and without exerting himself about it, a member of the Philological Seminary, and had to send in his first great essay, “ Upon the most ancient form of the Greek Verb,” which he had written at Christmas. But notwithstanding all this, he found time for several evenings a week at the theatres and concerts. Concerning the acting at the Theatre Royal, he writes home about Angely's<sup>1</sup> farces, which produced an indescribable effect upon the Berlin people. Amongst the actors, he praises

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<sup>1</sup> *Artizans' Holiday*, and other farces.

Devrient particularly,<sup>1</sup> and of the opera singers, Frau Milder-Hauptmann's fine voice greatly touched him. He exceedingly admired her "Iphigenia" in Glück's opera, and her singing in Spontini's *Nurmahal*. He had a great love of music, and went regularly to the concerts at the Singakademie, which was celebrated under Zelter's directorship.<sup>2</sup> He describes him as one at whom he never could look without pleasure, a venerable and worthy old man, and considered himself fortunate to have been present at the imposing celebration of Zelter's seventieth birthday on December 11, 1828, for which Rungenhagen, the co-director of the Singakademie, had composed a cantata, Goethe having written the text.<sup>3</sup>

Abeken made a short break in his residence at Berlin in the summer of 1828 in order to meet his father, his uncle Rudolf, and his sister Bernardine at Weimar. These days were especially memorable to him because his long-cherished desire of seeing Goethe was then fulfilled. The youthful student was an enthusiastic worshipper of the great poet, and he employed almost all his spare moments in acquiring a more profound knowledge of his works. When the new edition<sup>4</sup> of Goethe's works appeared, it was said that it contained much that was of minor value; he wrote indignantly: "Every one keeps harping in this strain to me, and I feel furious, for I am convinced that Goethe never writes rubbish. That every little thing he says is not a great work of art, I readily admit; it would indeed be strange if it were so. But God, who created the mind of man, also made the pebble that lies at our feet, and he who knows God will find Him in the pebble just as well as in the man. And so it is with Goethe. I love and value every little verse of Goethe's because it comes from him, because it teaches me to know him, because it says something that is true in a good way, often in the best way, because it is by the countless number of

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<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Devrient. 1784-1832.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Friedrich Zelter, 1768-1832; composer, and professor, later on, of the Berlin Singakademie.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe's Works. Weimar edition. Vol. i. 73 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Complete edition. 1827-1831. 49 vols.

such details and littlenesses that the whole great image of the man is made up."

It was, therefore, an indescribable joy to him to see Goethe himself at Weimar. Four sonnets bear witness to the affectionate ecstasy and almost painful awe with which the young man met the sovereign poet.

## CHAPTER II

### PRIZE ESSAY—MEDAL—EXAMINATION—ITALY

1828-1832

“Our life is a perpetual learning.”—*From the Spanish of B. Gracian.*

“Viel hier lehren die Trümmer, doch eins, was nirgend gelehrt wird.  
Selten im Leben und nie spricht man in Schulen davon :  
Ganz sein ! Wenn du es einmal warst, so mögen Barbaren,  
Trümmer und bröckeln an dir, deine Gestalt—sie besteht.”

PAUL HEYSE.

ABEKEN spent Christmas in Dresden at his uncle Christel's,<sup>1</sup> where his sister had also been staying since the summer. While there he had an opportunity of meeting Tieck,<sup>2</sup> and in a letter to his father he says : “I have been much impressed by Tieck's readings. You must have heard what a master he is in the art of reading aloud ; I had heard much about it, and went with great expectations, and yet I assure you I had no idea of what a pleasure it would be. After hearing him one ought to give up going to the theatre.

“It is really an intellectual illusion ; all the characters exist. I do not know how else to express myself than by saying that the poem itself seems to be alive. One cannot say that it is the beauty of utterance, nor that the reciter has put a beautiful expression into the words, for each one is just as it ought to be pronounced, in accordance with the spirit of the poet and that of the whole work. It is a harmonious unity such as can never be produced by different actors. Last week I heard him read ‘Götz von Berlichingen,’ and yesterday ‘Iphigenia ;’ the first was particularly fine ; I really cannot tell you how it held me.”

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<sup>1</sup> Christian Abeken went to live in Saxony at the beginning of the nineteenth century. His son, Ludwig von Abeken, born 1826, became Minister of Justice. His only daughter, Helene, is still living (1898) in Dresden.

<sup>2</sup> Ludwig Tieck, 1775-1853 ; superintendent of the Court Theatre at Dresden.



*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“DRESDEN, January 3, 1829.

“I have had the great pleasure, which probably falls to but few, of being alone with Tieck, and could thus really enjoy his conversation. His easy, lively, and intellectual talk, in which every word is the outcome of a rich, impulsive nature, his earnest dignity when roused, make an agreeable impression. I prefer hearing an able man, even when his views do not agree with my own, to hearing an insignificant man with whom I do agree. Thus Tieck said many things about Goethe from which I differed entirely—about *Wilhelm Meister*, for example; but, on the other hand, I was much delighted with what he said about religion and religious-mindedness, particularly when he declared that Goethe was highly religious, an opinion I had scarcely expected from his lips. He thought that his cheerfulness, his contentment with the world and all that exists, which teaches us to regard everything as good, *i.e.* as of God, and his unruffled calm as to the Divine over-ruling of all things and all destinies, that all this signifies real religiousness and a true faith. Here he was quite right, and so I have always considered Goethe's religion. That is not true religion which produces discontent with the world, and sadness which teaches us to despise it; but it is that which first of all teaches us to love it, and teaches the world itself to believe. Christianity intends this, and it is a misunderstanding of it to suppose it despises the world and is exalted above it.

“Tieck's reading of ‘Hamlet’ was all the more interesting from my having had much talk with him about it the previous evening. He read quite beautifully, contrary to the usual rendering in many ways, giving the speeches of the ghost, for instance, with modulation and feeling, and not monotonously, and he was certainly right, for the words are full of varying sentiment and passion, though it seemed peculiar at first.”

After his return to Berlin, Abeken was engaged upon two works, an essay for the Philological Seminary, *A Dialogue of Plato*, and a Church history essay on *The Donatists*, for the Theological Seminary. His abilities were recognised by the Theological Seminary, and Neander put Abeken's modesty to the blush by showing him off on all occasions.

He was gratified at being awarded forty-five thalers for

one of his exegetical essays, though money was of no value to him, except in so far as he could use it for others or his own studies, and it "slipped through his fingers" directly. Sometimes he would help a friend in need or send some little gift home, or, more rarely, buy himself a favourite book.

He started a literary society among his intimate friends, and they met every week for discussion and reading an essay on scientific subjects. He also studied Goethe's works assiduously.

*To his Sister Bernardine.*

"BERLIN, May 1, 1829.

"The day before yesterday Paganini gave a violin concert for the benefit of the victims of the floods in East Prussia. He is a most strange fellow, and though one hears with one's own ears, one does not trust one's hearing nor believe in it, let alone understand it! Much is really very beautiful, a great deal pierces through joints and marrow till one is ready to cry, while a great deal is beyond words, ineffably lovely."

*To his Sister Bernardine.*

"BERLIN, April 6, 1829.

"I heard Mdle. Sonntag last Saturday as Desdemona in Rossini's *Othello*. I had to get my ticket as early as Wednesday, and was fortunate in obtaining one in the pit after standing for an hour in the crowd. The performance began at six o'clock, and I went at three, and had to wait in the vestibule with an immense crowd of people till five, when the theatre was opened, and we felt like children at a Christmas-tree when the lights of the ticket-office shone out; we rushed in with no less eagerness, but I only got standing-room, and so, for the pleasure of hearing Sonntag sing, I had to stand in the most tremendous crowd from three o'clock till half-past nine. I was half dead when I came out. Sonntag acted and sang wonderfully; never have I seen such an enchanting and graceful, I might even say such a refreshing, apparition on the stage, either in acting or singing. But she does not carry one away with the tragic power of Milder or Schechner, whose voices penetrate the heart like a sword, piercing bones and marrow. She is graceful and sweet even in the tragic role of Desdemona."

Abeken widened his studies in the summer of 1829 by taking up certain branches of physics, especially botany and mineralogy. A cold spring was followed by sudden heat, from which he suffered very much, while working at his multitudinous studies in his sunny room, and he used to say that if he had not been pressed with work, he would have gone to the shady Thiergarten to get stung by gnats, the only animals there from which it could take its name.

In November he begged his father to let him stop in Berlin until the spring of 1831. Neander had dissuaded him from taking his degree, and he was preparing for his examination for a licentiateship. His other reason for remaining was one he could not easily give, namely, that he intended to work up a prize essay which required plenty of time after Easter, and which he would not be permitted to send in had he taken his degree at Easter 1830. His father's ready compliance with his request delighted him greatly.

The dispute between Rationalists and Pietists, which was causing a good deal of excitement in Berlin, troubled him, and he scarcely knew which party he thought most in the wrong.

*To his Father.*

“BERLIN, May 12, 1830.

“You know I am neither a philosopher nor a Pietist, and could never become either the one or the other, but I have a still greater aversion to this superficial enlightenment of the Halle School, no indeed, the goody-goodiness is still worse.

“There is nothing more melancholy than discord and open dispute in these things, at least in the way it is carried on at present, and the worst of it is, that people reject the wheat with the chaff, and in this case they do not merely oppose the Pietists and hypocrites, but true piety is thrown out with them.”

After sending in his essay he went for a holiday in the Harz with his friend Wiese, and persuaded his father to join them.

Shortly after his return to Berlin he announced the good

news of the success of his essay to his father, and that he had been awarded the gold medal.

The nearer the time approached for him to become a minister the more earnestly did he examine himself as to whether he was fit for this vocation.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"I should be very unhappy were I ever to become a practical theologian. The Church as it is does not satisfy me. I shall try to influence it to become something different, but not as a practical theologian, at least not continuously, and especially not until I am quite certain of myself."

The struggle with doubt and the battle with the old Adam often takes place most strongly in the very men who are most deeply penetrated by a powerful and living faith. . . . The more deeply he felt the responsibility he was taking upon himself towards God and man, the more was his soul disturbed by each uncertainty.

He passed his examination on March 11, 1831, and then left Berlin for home. In his diaries he writes of his sojourn at home in 1831 and his intercourse with friends and relations, particularly with his uncle Rudolf and his family. He was able to fulfil his father's wish of preaching at St. Mary's Church, Osnabrück, in June.

Until he entered upon the really practical work of his vocation he was tormented by violent struggles and divers doubts. But when life made heavy claims upon him, both as to himself and his office, it found him prepared. Like dust before the sun the shadows fled away. . . . Through suffering and in suffering his knowledge of the Scriptures matured, and according to them he would live, and by them alone be guided, not holding to the letter, but to the spirit.

Abeken's greatest desire was fulfilled in the autumn of 1831, and he went to Rome. "I shall enjoy going south," he says, "but I thank Heaven for having allowed me to be born in Germany, for I should not like to live in Italy always. Our dear Germany, with its honest simplicity, its calm magnanimity, is the best place to live



in, and it is the finest combination of the south and north as well.

He bade farewell to his home on September 21, little foreseeing how long the land of his dreams would keep him, nor that he was to find his vocation there.

The first letter written on his journey shows the longing for home struggling with delight in the present :—

“ I am now on my journey,” he writes, “ and could go on travelling straight away to the end of the world. You will smile, my dear father, but will forgive me when I tell you that at first the feelings of the parting and of loneliness had the upper hand, but that afterwards the full, living interests of the world, and fair hopes for the future, began to assert their influence. Though I know how much I have left behind, how many blessings I have enjoyed of late, and it is enough to overwhelm one at the moment of parting, to have a whole series of past days and months crowd upon the memory ; though all the love just experienced lies all at once behind one, and there is the knowledge that one may travel throughout the world without finding such love again ; still, one cannot take all this in quietly nor forsake the enjoyment of the present to realize the sense of a love which will endure and will send forth its influence upon one however far away.”

He reached Rome on November 9, 1831, via Lucerne, the St. Gothard, Milan, Bologna, and Florence. He writes on the evening of his arrival to his father :—

“ ROME, *November 9, 1831.*

“ Well ! I am in Rome ! I can't yet grasp, nor hardly believe that I am in Rome, can scarcely rejoice in it, for it seems so great a fact. But I can thank you for it, my dearest father, and I do so with all my heart. At half-past two I drove through the Porta del Popolo. I had seen the cupola of St. Peter's ever since nine o'clock in the morning, when it was four German miles distant, growing gradually larger till it rose like a mountain. On the Piazza del Popolo the obelisk and several fountains form a worthy entrance into Rome. I hastened up the beautiful steps of the Trinita dei Monte in the twilight and looked out from thence over the darkening city which lay beneath a sky of purest



blue, then at half-past six I found my way to the Forum, which I reached by the arch of Septimius Severus, and went through the ruins as far as the arch of Titus at the other end. This gigantic ruin, seen by the half-light of the moon, far surpassed my conceptions of it, and was far more splendid than anything which so far I have seen standing in a perfect condition. I recognised all the details directly, and all just as I had imagined, but much larger. Here, as is always the case, it is the actual presence of the object which affects one."

On the following day, in his eagerness and youthful impatience, he saw more than his mind could take in, and in the evening he writes to his family: "I have had a day which has tired me, but it will be mine all my life. I can't say anything about it yet. Oh, my dearest ones! to be standing before the things of which one has heard and learned to reverence from youth up, all that is greatest and most glorious on earth, to have all really before one's very eyes, and all so much grander than one ever thought possible! What can support such feelings?"

Although Abeken's mind was in a state of ferment and struggle during his stay in Berlin, he had returned home much the same child in character as he had left, but now both his outward and inward experiences developed rapidly all the dormant germs of character and matured his manhood. Apart from the study offered by Rome itself, he found employment in his own line with Bunsen, and took part in the work of the Archæological Institution which Bunsen had helped to start, and which was under the management of Gerhard.<sup>1</sup> He soon formed a friendship with him and Ambrosch, tutor in the Bunsen family; also with Tippelkirsch, the chaplain to the German Legation, and with Kestner,<sup>2</sup> the Chancellor, and his nephew, who was often called Kestnerino. He also made friends with the engraver Eichens,<sup>3</sup> the sculptor Wiegmann, and Schilgen,

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<sup>1</sup> Eduard Gerhard, 1795-1867, founder of the Archæological Institution in Rome; afterwards professor at Berlin.

<sup>2</sup> Kestner was a son of Charlotte Buff, the original of Lotte in *The Sorrows of Werther*.

<sup>3</sup> Eduard Eichens, 1804-1877.

the painter, Dr. Forchhammer,<sup>1</sup> the archæologist, and Roestell,<sup>2</sup> friendships which lasted as long as they lived.

He also made the acquaintance of Thorwaldsen,<sup>3</sup> who looked the genuine northerner, making upon him "just the impression of dignity and benevolence one would imagine and desire in an artist."

*To his Sister.*

"ROME, December 24, 1831.

"There is none of our home celebration of Christmas here. But they decorate their houses with evergreen trees, set up a laurel-bush in a room, and have a sculptured creche—that is, a representation of Christ in the manger in the stable, or, as is usual, in a cave. On the Piazza Navona, where there is a market, there are numbers of mangers for sale, which I delight in because of their quaint clumsiness, their well-intentioned, showy gaudiness, and at times their childlike, natural feeling.

"It is very amusing to walk about at this season, especially at night, for although there is no real Christmas market, the shops are gaily decorated, particularly the provision-shops, which stand out almost half-way in the street, with large oil-lamps, regular torches, standing near, the flames freely blowing in the wind, casting picturesque lines of light and shade upon plucked capons, geese, and other poultry, fruits, cheeses, and so on, and generally very tastefully arranged. Some streets look as if illuminated because of the numbers of these shops, with their quantities of lights. The people crowd about them with the curious mixture of phlegmatic grandeur and naturalness of bearing, with supernatural vivacity, often brawling, shouting, and laughing, fine figures both men and women, frequently with beautiful faces, among them, mothers with babies at their breasts, and others playing about, and as ragged as possible. Before some of the countless images of the Madonna, there are groups of Pifferari (players on the bagpipes), with hard sun-burnt faces, wearing picturesque blue mantles, or a group of singers accompanying one of their number on the guitar, sometimes singing to the Madonna, and again in homage to a sweetheart, whilst an audience eagerly gathers round them.

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Wilhelm Forchhammer, 1801 ; professor at Kiel, 1837.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Roestell, 1826–1831 ; Secretary, Prussian Legation under Bunsen, and afterwards professor at Marburg.

<sup>3</sup> Albert Thorwaldsen, 1770–1844 ; then living in Rome.

It is a delightfully picturesque scene, such as one does not see with us, and compared with which the Christmas market in Berlin is nothing. The finest sight is on the square in front of the Pantheon, around the fountain with the obelisk, whose murmur, at other times so clear, is lost amid the noise of the people. And above all this gay stirring life, in the solemn, silent grandeur of the night, the huge Pantheon rises in the dark sky, that marvel of beauty which eighteen hundred years has not been able to destroy, the divine columns of its portico only dimly lit by the flickering lights in the square. I always shudder when I pass it in the dark."

At the end of the year Abeken asked his father to allow him to remain in Rome until Easter 1833, as he would be better able to pursue his studies near Bunsen, and that he has begun to work seriously with a definite object, and not to fritter his time in idle diversity of pursuits, and that only in this way can Rome be of use to every man of cultivation. His father granted his request, only advising: "Look after your health, and I will look after your purse."

Meanwhile, under Bunsen's guidance, Abeken busied himself in making a collection of the liturgies of the Christian Churches, a work to which Bunsen had contributed at first, and for which he had long desired the assistance of a young theologian. "In this way," says Abeken, "I shall learn an immense deal, and lay the foundation for future studies which will be invaluable."

### *To his Sister.*

"ROME, *Evening, February 7.*

"... Fancy my preaching again yesterday for the Chaplain. You would have been more anxious than you were that time at Osnabrück, for I was an hour and ten minutes in the pulpit. The sermon put me into a state of excitement for the whole week. The text was from the Epistle for the day: Col. iii. 12-17; and the subject, the peace of God, which the world, especially in the present day, has not got, and which can only be obtained through faith, which is love. . . . I had the pleasure of being listened to with very willing ears and hearts, and I found that Bunsen was much pleased with it. He came to me directly afterwards, embraced and kissed me heartily. . . . That he was

so kind and affectionate about the sermon, greatly delights, for he is one of the profoundest thinkers and most amiable men I know. And his wife, an Englishwoman by birth, one respects highly the more one knows her, though she rather repels than attracts most Germans on first acquaintance."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"ROME, May 12, 1832.

"How often our thoughts must have met of late, and how much I would have given to have been with you just now, so that we might commemorate the memory of the great dead together, as we have so often rejoiced together in his life. We must now accustom ourselves by degrees to think of him with that reverence and devotion wherewith we think of the vanished great ones of antiquity, and rejoice in his glory. But just now he is still too near us, and too close to our hearts for even the proudest and happiest recollection of him not to be mixed with bitter sorrow for his loss. Here in Rome every sorrow is mitigated because one's mind is lifted up and widened, but one can scarcely ever feel free from a constant feeling of solemn sadness. . . . Has Germany really felt what it ought to feel at such an event? . . . Goethe's greatness was fully recognised in an article in the *Journal des Debats*. . . . it further said that his death was a happy event betokening a fortunate epoch for Germany, since old Germany has gone with him to the grave, and now all must be different and young; that now is the time of other interests, other glories, and is no longer the time for great *men*, but for the *people* to be great, so that individuals should cease to win distinction. I fear it is only too true, but it is not a happy thing either for Germany or for humanity. . . ."

Abeken never ceased congratulating himself at being in Italy at this time. The news from home sounded alarming to him both in respect to politics and matters ecclesiastical. "I am of no further use to Germany at present, and I thank God (and you, dearest father) that I am in Rome, and I do not wish to leave it."



## CHAPTER III

### FRASCATI—THE BUNSEN FAMILY—APPOINTED CHAPLAIN TO THE PRUSSIAN LEGATION

1832-1833

“Lang und schmal ist ein Weg, sobald du ihn gehest, so wird er  
Breiter, aber du ziehst Schlangengewinde dir nach.  
Bist du ans Ende gekommen, so werde der schreckliche Knoten  
Dir zur Blume und du gieb sie dem Ganzen dahin !”

GOETHE, *Weissagungen des Vakis*.

ABEKEN's intimacy with the Bunsens was a marked turning-point in his life. He loved them both and admired them with an enthusiastic admiration and devoted affection which was faithful unto death, and was treated by them as a son. Bunsen was at the height of his fame, and in the success of the manifold duties of his position, which was one of great responsibility. Richly endowed as he was in mind and heart, he irresistibly won the affections of all who came into contact with him.

Frau Bunsen, with her clear understanding, depth of feeling, strength of character, and power of expression, both in speech and in writing, inevitably obtained an extraordinary influence over Abeken.

In his sketch of Bunsen,<sup>1</sup> he says of them both : “What Bunsen's wife was to him, and what a support she had been in his life both outwardly and inwardly, is shown by his words to her on his death-bed : ‘In you I have loved the Eternal.’ Seldom has there been any married couple so fully the equal of one another in heart and mind, and never a more complete realization of that beautiful Roman designation of marriage : ‘Individua vitæ consuetudo,’ and ‘Consortium omnis vitæ, divine et humani iuris communicatio.’”

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<sup>1</sup> “Our Time,” *Konversations-Lexikon Jahrbuch*. F. A. Borchhaus.



In another place Abeken writes—

“The King recognised Bunsen at once, and showed his sound judgment; he is said to have it always. The Crown Prince is Bunsen’s friend, really his *friend*. It requires something to stand in such relationship to a Crown Prince, but it also requires a *German* Prince.”

Bunsen recognised Abeken’s worth from the first, recommended him as early as 1832 as the successor to Toppelkirsch, the chaplain to the Legation, who desired to be sent elsewhere. A letter from Abeken to his father immediately after his arrival at Frascati, where he spent the summer with the Bunsens, expresses his surprise, for he had never sued for a favour nor for any appointment. When, therefore, it fell to his lot, he looked upon it, as he did upon everything in his life, as from God, and he devoted the best powers of mind and body to it. He quickly decided to accept this offer, although the responsibility was clearly apparent to him.

*To his Father.*

“FRASCATI, July 4, 1832.

“ . . . I am still young and tremendously inexperienced, but the cure of souls here needs, not so much knowledge of inner life and family relations, such as it would take long years to acquire, but freshness and youth and versatility fitted to cope with a variety of elements, youthful ones, for the most part. And as to work and ability, it is important that one should plunge into the water if one wishes to learn how to swim. If any post can be regarded as preparative, then no position is more so than this one. God will give His blessing.

“The new post will give me an assured living for the present. The Chaplain to the Legation has his house rent free and a thousand thalers a year. Besides which, Bunsen positively assures me that if the post is held for three to five years, I may count upon the Ministry conferring a superintendentship or an academic degree,<sup>1</sup> so that, outwardly speaking, my future is settled in almost too brilliant a manner.

“Ought I to take into consideration my separation for three, perhaps for four or five, years from Germany, and from you too, my dearest father, however painful it is to me. God knows

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<sup>1</sup> Headmastership of a class.

how loth I am to miss next summer with you, for we could not have spent a longer time together. It is more than desirable, it is almost necessary, for me to be away from Germany : I can be of no use to disturbed Germany. I must first of all form my mind at a distance from the excitements of the day. Though my sojourn in Rome has been highly beneficial to me, for its own sake, it would be even yet more so were I kept to a definite occupation. . . . ”

His father replied by return : “ Your prompt decision is right ; long delay and consideration are not often of much help in the long run, and the first decision is the best.”

The following confession to his sister gives an insight into the state of Abeken’s mind, and the doubts which beset him.

“ How often do I pray : ‘ Give me faith—certainty.’ Oh, when shall I get it ? I am so troubled, so disturbed, so dependent on externals, and heaps of pettinesses and follies which I ought to have got rid of long ago, still exercise great influence over me. I struggle hard and daily, but all is upset in a moment. I feel but too well of how little avail is my own strength, and how, after all, trust in God and constant prayer, with entire resignation to His will, and continual striving after divine things, are the only means by which we receive strength for the fight with ourselves and our vain nothingness ! But all the time the thought that one *must* conquer, is a great help.”

Abeken had some charming summer months at Frascati, and he could not say enough in his letters home about the impression made on him by the beauty of the Italian scenery.

*To his Sister.*

“ FRASCATI, July 8, 1832.

“ . . . . If one would thoroughly enjoy country life and the fresh air, one must have spent July in Rome, with the oppression of its sultry scirocco, and the deadly closeness of the streets. Then it seems like Paradise here. . . .

“ I moved into my quarters on Sunday, here in the wing of the Villa Aldebrandini, or Belvedere, belonging to Prince Borghese, situated above Frascati on the road to Tusculum, the most splendid position imaginable. There is a large terrace in front of the villa, with a superb view of the Campagna beyond Rome to the sea, stretching away across the horizon in a broad stripe,

alternately dark and full of light, finely wooded with oaks, olives, laurels and pines, fresh and cool, and life made joyous with the singing birds. I settled myself delightfully into my new nest and then went for a pleasant evening with the Bunsens at the Villa Piccolomini, about two hundred steps below me, but above Frascati. I can see the Campagna, but not Rome, from my place, and all the beautiful colours of the Sabine hills, and Monte Gennaro, whose fine, bold outlines in many shades of blue and violet call forth continual raptures from me. A Capuchin monastery peeps out from the oak-woods above the delicious olive-gardens on the mountain slopes, and higher still are the pines of the Villa Ruffinella, and down below me I can look right into the windows of the Villa Piccolomini. I get the morning sun until eleven o'clock, but one can keep cool even in a sunny room in this pure mountain air, by alternately opening and shutting the window. There is no fear of suffering from heat at all.

"I get up at four o'clock, and take a walk, and at five work until noon, when I dine in my room; during the meal I read English, at which I am working very hard. Then I work again until six or seven, when I go for another walk; the Bunsens generally come for me, and I do not willingly miss an evening cup of tea with them. After a busy, solitary day, friendly company like theirs is only too welcome."

Abeken had become acquainted with an English lady, Miss Mary Hutchings Thompson, at the Bunsen's house at Rome. She was the daughter of an army officer, and had been governess since the spring. In the daily exchange of their native languages, for Miss Thompson spoke English with him and he taught her German, a close friendship at Frascati followed.

Abeken's appointment to the chaplaincy was delayed some time longer, and he wrote on September 21 to his father that Toppelkirsch would probably remain in Rome until Easter 1834, as no suitable post had been found for him. But he asked to be allowed to remain in Rome till then, for it would be impossible to finish the work he had begun with Bunsen. He had now another reason for making this request. Bunsen asked him to take the place of tutor to his sons should he stay on in Rome, a request not to be refused, nor did he wish to do so. The weekly lessons,

only twenty-four in number, required little preparation on his part, and left him time enough for his own work. "Personally," he writes, "I have long wished for my own sake to get some educational work to do, and have felt how good it would be for my own education, and in this case it will be doubly so, for I can carry on my scholarly occupation at the same time. So on February 1st I shall move to the Bunsens', and you know how pleasant I find life in that family."

Thus began a busy, happy winter for Abeken.

*To his Father.*

"ROME, *November 20, 1832.*

"The sun is shining and illuminating the pyramid of Cestius and the white marble tombs<sup>1</sup> amidst the dark green cypresses and pines beneath which the roses and rosemary are blooming, while the old walls and battlements and fortified gate of S. Paolo stand in solemn gloom. Between us and the residential part of Rome there is a wide, open field where the sparse trees are daily growing barer, and just beyond rises the Aventine, the Capitol farther off, and the Palatine farther still. The cupolas of Santa Maria Maggiore are in the far distance, and on the east are the pleasant Alban hills, luxuriant and lovely, bathed in sunshine.

"This cemetery in Rome is a solemn and sacred spot; the ground and all that nature and the hand of man has done for it, express strongly and solemnly thoughts of death and decay. In this burying-ground, this great grave of a world, one almost forgets the single grave, or, at all events, only thinks of it as natural and in its own proper place.

"When one dwells on the fall and death of such a past as this, it is as if individual sorrow were swallowed up in the universal sacredness of death. But in death one sees and feels life also, life and its unconquerable, imperishable grandeur and power, so one should not be depressed by the thought of death, but rather encouraged, since it directs our thoughts back to life, solemnly and significantly. And, indeed, one learns the real meaning and value of life through death, when standing by the grave, and every *Memento mori* rightly understood surely becomes a *Memento vivere*."

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<sup>1</sup> The Protestant Cemetery is near the pyramid of Cestius.



*To his Sister.**"ROME, January 26, 1833.*

"It is a pitch-dark night, but here in my room there is the cheerful light of both fire and lamp to help me forget the cold starlight night, which is cold enough to freeze both Rome and the Romans; fearfully cold, I say, but not for me here in my warm room; and the fresh, cold tramontana which I feel out of doors does an honest North German good both in body and mind.

"But it is Italy, and in spite of the cold, the sun at noon shines so warmly into the room and on my back that I could not be more comfortable. But the morning hours by lamp-light in winter are the cosiest and nicest of the whole day. And at night, as long as my light is burning and I am cut off from the rest of the world buried in silence and sleep, I feel that I belong to myself and am my own master, with no one to make any claim upon me. But the claims begin when day breaks, and then I have to do what there is to do and am the servant of others. . . ."

*To his Father.**"ROME, January 28, 1833.*

"I called on Overbeck,<sup>1</sup> who is unquestionably the first painter in Rome, for the first time on the 26th, and it was quite wicked of me for it to have been the first time. . . ."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.**"ON THE CAPITOL, May 30, 1833.*

". . . The Wednesday before Whitsunday we had a tea-party of a kind not easily got together anywhere but in Rome. Joukoffsky<sup>2</sup> and Turgenjief,<sup>3</sup> and an excellent and charming Livonian, Colonel Reutern.<sup>4</sup> He lost his right arm in the campaign, and now draws and paints and etches very well with his left hand. The most distinguished of living artists were also present, Thorwaldsen, Overbeck and Cornelius.<sup>5</sup> I must own

<sup>1</sup> Johann Friedrich Overbeck, 1789-1869. Born in Lübeck, studied in Vienna, lived and died in Rome.

<sup>2</sup> Joukoffsky, poet and tutor to the Tsarawitz.

<sup>3</sup> Nicolai Turgenjief, 1790-1871. Condemned to death in 1826. Lived afterwards in Paris.

<sup>4</sup> Gerhardt von Reutern, a German in the Russian service. Lost his right arm in the War of Liberation, 1813-1814. Became a fine artist.

<sup>5</sup> Peter von Cornelius, 1783-1867; distinguished artist.



that my heart beat rather faster on sitting down to supper with them.

“ This last winter we greatly enjoyed the society of an agreeable Livonian family, von Güldenstubbe, good people, hospitable and pleasant. But what I particularly enjoyed was the acquaintance of two charming English clergymen, Hare <sup>1</sup> and Worsley, especially the former. We should have been only too glad to have kept him here to translate the third part of Niebuhr’s *History of Rome*. He has translated the first two parts very well, and is as good a philologist as a theologian. He is the most charming Englishman I know.

“ There is something odd about this decidedly marked nationality, often rugged and repellant to foreigners, and mostly narrow and one-sided, but possessing so much practical capability, such decidedly intrinsic soundness, and such essential goodness if it has anything in it at all, that one cannot but like it on getting to know it, for the sake of its very faults and one-sidedness. One does not feel that unrestrained subjectivity which so specially belongs to us Germans, but each individual is the result of a peculiar development of a common life based on the spirit of a great people. This will, however, become less and less the case. Endeavours are being made, both in Church and State, to destroy this intrinsic principle of soundness. With all our deficiencies, we stand a step higher than they do in spiritual things, because we (already ?) have been through the struggle which still lies before them. It will not go deep with them, as it has done and is doing with us Germans ; with them everything turns at once to the practical, the external, and in that region they will fight it out if they have the strength. With them everything becomes an outward, firmly defined, consolidated party ; their practical and political greatness rests upon this. Unpleasing as the English used to be to me, I now have a great respect for them. However, it is only the best of them that come to this house.”

The summer of 1833 he again spent at Frascati, and he worked at two theological studies : “ The Service of the Christian Church as it was in the Time of St. Chrysostom, and previously, and to compare it with extant liturgies, which pass as old ones. Then to go through the Old Testament with reference to liturgies, and to compare it with Christ’s interpretation of the subject.”

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<sup>1</sup> Archdeacon Julius Hare.

He writes to his father from Frascati :—

“ July 21, 1833.

“ I am not, of course, so completely free and independent now at the Bunsens' as last summer in my own little quarters. Still, it is a very good thing for me, good discipline, for a position such as mine in a strange house, and living in close relations with a strange family, particularly such a family as this, is just the sort of grindstone I need. Rome polishes one up famously in every way, though, unfortunately, every one is not a genuine diamond to be made something of by polishing. But polished glass is sometimes worth something! We arrived this time at Frascati by moonlight, and it was enchanting, and the remembrance of last summer, as pleasant as sad, contributed to the deep impression and made a profound effect on me. One cannot live in a little circle as I have done for the last year, without finding that many of the different points of contact are associated with lasting impressions of joy or sorrow.”

Notwithstanding the various occupations and interests, Abeken did not forget his own country.

*To his Father.*

“ FRASCATI, July 27, 1833.

“ The last few days, whilst teaching the children the geography of Germany, I have gone over it again with a really proud pleasure, and am delighted at the historic significance of every part of it, and of how peculiarly independent it all is. Those South Germans, what a stout, vigorous people they are! *But they are too near to French influence. We must win back the barricade of the Vosges!* The French had better beware of chattering too much about the left bank of the Rhine, or perhaps we may begin to *speak* about it. We should have rather more right to do so. *Strassburg ought not to remain French*—that cannot be the will of God.”

At last Abeken obtained the chaplaincy to the Legation. He informs his father of his acceptance of it :—

“ FRASCATI, September 7, 1833.

“ I have already written to you that Bunsen wished to bring the matter immediately before the King. He asked his patronage a year ago for our liturgical work, and for permission to dedicate

it to him, which he graciously granted. And in view of the King's keen interest in it, it became necessary for him to see something of it, and I could not oppose Bunsen's wish of so far finishing a portion so that it might be submitted to the King. This did not, indeed, please me, for the strict scientific form of the work was thereby lost, and it had to be too much arranged for the eye of one person, the King, which was particularly regrettable with such a subject as the liturgy. However, I believe it is now fit to be presented before any tribunal. It will always remain a sort of *captatio benevolentia*, and although it was very unpleasant to me, I could not adduce any reasonable objection to Bunsen's wish in a matter purely objective, and with which I really had no concern. He mentioned me when he wrote to the King. I don't know what he said, but apparently nothing bad; and he begged that I might get the appointment. . . . It is not unusual for the King to fill such posts in cases where he has a personal interest, but still we expected him to confer with the Minister first. . . . Instead of this, his Majesty answered promptly. He got our papers at Teplitz about August 10, and the evening before last Bunsen received by post a royal sign manual in the customary form . . . a few short lines dictated by the King acknowledging the congratulations of his birthday. 'Accept my thanks for both, and my approval of your commendation to the appointment of Abeken, licentiate of theology, to the vacant chaplaincy to the Legation, of which I have given notice to Ancillon,<sup>1</sup> Minister of State.'"

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<sup>1</sup> Johann Friedrich Ancillon, 1767-1837; Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1832.

## CHAPTER IV

### GENEVA — BERLIN — HOME — CHAPLAINCY — JOY— SORROW—IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH—CHOLERA IN ROME

1834-1837

“Ask what thou wilt, and then give what thou askest.”

S. AUGUSTINE.

“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.”—HEB. x. 35.

“Quid quaeritis viventem inter mortuos? Non est hic, sed resurrexit.”

AFTER the chaplaincy to the Legation had been assured to him by favour of the King, Abeken considered it essential to acquire proficiency in French theology and in the French language, so that he might be able to preach in that language. This was a matter of conscience with him, notwithstanding his antipathy to everything French, so he decided to leave for Geneva at the beginning of January 1834.

“I left Rome,” he writes his father, “in the second hour of the new year, and but half realising what I was doing. Bunsen and his wife sat up with me till the carriage came; they were so full of kindness that I cannot recall those hours without deep feeling. My things were packed, and I was provided with food and with every conceivable comfort for the journey like a mother’s pampered boy leaving home for the first time. Frau Bunsen looked after the smallest and most superfluous details; she could not have done more for her own child. You really ought to know these people.”

Abeken felt the parting from the Bunsen family keenly, and he writes to Bunsen from Milan :—

“I am as homesick for Rome as I have ever been for my own home; Rome, your house, has become a second home to me—a home, I may say, in a higher sense of the word than the naturally



accepted one. . . . I look back upon the time that has passed with deep shame and regret, but still, the happy sense of gratitude to God outweighs all other feelings. I am ready and glad to confess that during these years exceeding abundance of good gifts has fallen to my lot, not by my own doing, but in unlimited measure from the Giver of all good things."

Abeken was employed for the first time on certain commissions, as was often the case in after years, which did not come within the scope of his professional duties. These missions mostly had to do with important despatches, sometimes also with verbal communications.

He arrived at Geneva on January 18, after a fatiguing and troublesome journey by way of Leghorn, Pisa, Lucca, Genoa, and Milan. The introductions given him by Bunsen rendered it easy for him to enter society there, and he was received with a kind cordiality and friendliness of which he could not speak too highly.

Bunsen took his eldest son to Schulpforta in March 1834, and Ernest, the second son, to enter the Berlin cadet corps, himself remaining in Berlin until Abeken should meet him there for his ordination in the summer. . . .

He writes to Bunsen from Geneva in March :—

"If only you could have travelled by way of Geneva ! . . . I have learnt more than French since I have been here ; above all, I have learnt to thank God that I am a German and that I am not called to work for the Church of France. . ."

Abeken's feeling that he ought to go to Berlin for his ordination became a certainty while at Geneva, and he greatly wished to visit his father at Osnabrück.

*To Frau Bunsen.*

“ GENEVA, April 3, 1834.

"What kind things you say to me in writing about your boys ! Ah, dear lady, if you but knew how precious your kindness is to me, for express it I cannot ! It is not often given one to feel such love and reverence, nor to receive such kindness. I have loved and respected many women from my youth,

but none has so taken a mother's place, and how could I hope that you would ever give me the right to cherish the affection of a son for you ? . . ."

Abeken's examination took place in Berlin on June 6, 1834, and he writes with his wonted modesty about it :—

"I passed a verbal examination on Friday. I was in a great fright about it at first, but it was a mere form and went off all right, and the brilliant certificate which I received is really unmerited. Every one was very kind, and a very influential man has promised me a brilliant future. I have to thank Bunsen for it all more than myself."

He was ordained on June 17, 1834.

*To Frau Bunsen.*

"OSNABRÜCK, *June 27, 1834.*

"I have been here since yesterday evening, and I leave you to imagine my feelings on returning to my father's house. . . .

"I took leave of your husband on Tuesday evening, for a short time only, but with deep feeling. What I possess in him and through him, I never find elsewhere. . . . "God bless you. Love and kisses to the children. With truest filial affection, yours,  
H. ABEKEN."

*To Frau Bunsen.*

"OSNABRÜCK, *July 26, 1834.*

"Again our journey is postponed, my dear and motherly friend, and my heart grows heavier in consequence. . . .

"I am longing to start. . . . Do not think I am insensible to, or ungrateful for, the happiness of home—oh, no ! I draw full draughts of all that is offered me here, I revel in the affection of my family, I am truly grateful to God for the blessings He bestows on me here—for my dear, good father, and for his unimpaired health of body and mind ; for my sister, who is affection personified—for everything, everything. I recognize it all with deep and hearty feeling, which is the deeper because God has given me another dear and beloved home elsewhere, and has given me there what He withdrew from me here by the early death of my mother. I cannot express how I feel it all,—Your loving child.

"H. ABEKEN."

Shortly after Abeken's arrival in Italy, Frau Bunsen wrote to him :—

“ . . . My last work before leaving Palazzo Caffarelli, was to fit up the room in which my Ernest used to sleep, for you. I hope you will stay there as long as convenient to you, *i.e.* till your own home is quite ready, even if we all come to Rome to receive my husband. . . . At Frascati, too, everything has been prepared for you. . . .

“ I never remembered to thank you for the long and interesting accounts you gave me of Henry and Ernest. It is odd, but it seems to me that *I knew without your telling me* you would give me every possible help in this respect—that it was a settled thing that you would do everything for me in your power. I believe this feeling must come from the consciousness I have that I should not only do anything I could for you, but could not refrain from doing. I am delighted to hear of the admiration you have aroused in Berlin.”

Bunsen and Abeken travelled back to Rome with all possible speed, often journeying by night.

“ We have flown,” writes Abeken to his father on August 25, from Frascati. “ You will not blame me for not being able to write from Rome, but there was so much commotion and excitement . . . yesterday afternoon I came out to Frascati, a place only too full of memories, so that you see I hardly yet know whether I am on my head or my heels. When I think of you and Bernardine in your old places in our old house, quiet and undisturbed where we have so often been together, it gives me a strange sensation. May God grant me grace and strength for my new and difficult duties. Pray for me, my dearest father ! . . . ”

*To his Father.*

“ ROME, September 22, 1834.

“ If my work only consisted in preaching, I should not have such confusion, but there is the paying and receiving of visits, of dispensing alms, receiving petitions, and now I have a sick man in our little Evangelical hospital. I am unaccustomed to have to do with the most various people for hours on end ; it would be a trifle to you, but is a labour for me. Service is at eight on Sundays, and I generally take my hat and gloves to

go out immediately afterwards, at ten, but seldom get out of the house before twelve. I dine with a friend, and drive out to Frascati at three.

"This is a difficult post in many ways ; there is no proper parish . . . there is little goodwill among the artists, and very little general interest in religious matters ; those who take a living interest belong to the Legation, which has a party bias, so religion and church affairs are regarded by many as a party matter. This holds back many excellent young people, because they wish to avoid this appearance.

"In the winter people come occasionally whom it is a pleasure to meet, and before whom one delights to preach, but otherwise one feels rather like a missionary in church. . . . My congregation is, as you may fancy, rather small now, ten to sixteen the last few Sundays ; on the first it was, of course, fuller.

"My stipend has been granted me in full from 1st June, because of the extremely favourable result of my *viva voce* examination, as the ministerial rescript puts it."

Shortly before leaving Geneva, Abeken had taken the serious step of asking Miss Thompson to marry him, but she had not immediately acceded to his offer, not willing to bind a young man to her sad fate, particularly as she was several years his senior, and was entirely without means.

Mary Hutchings Thompson, the daughter of an English officer, was born at Dover in 1802, and had grown up in affluent circumstances, never expecting to have to earn her living. By the early death of both her parents, she lost home and income. She only had one sister left out of a family of eight, whom she had to support. In her seventeenth year she had been engaged, but her *fiancé* died, so from her youth a past full of joy and of sorrow had lain behind her, and a hard and lonely future seemed in store for her. In the spring of 1832, after many sad experiences, she found a kind home with the Bunsens, which she remembered with gratitude on her deathbed. In this family she first awoke to spiritual life, and there lay in her nature a real aspiration after all that was noble and good.

Whilst at home Abeken told his father of his desire to become engaged to Miss Thompson, and obtained his consent, provided Bunsen was not opposed to it. He therefore



proposed to her shortly after his return to Rome. He writes to his father :—

“ Give me your blessing, my dearest father, and I shall not lack the Divine blessing. My dear mother in heaven surely knows about us and will also bless us. In my Mary you will have a dear, good daughter and happiness, if God grants us ever to live together again.”

*To his Sister.*

“ ROME, October 28, 1834.

“ How delighted you and my dearest father would be if I could bring my fiancée to see you both, he with his new daughter and you with your sister. As yet you do not know what it is to have a sister, but I do, for I have you. Give her the full measure of true, pure affection, dear heart, which you have always shown for me. . . . Think how utterly alone she is in the world, poor dear, with neither father nor mother, and with only one sister out of a family of five brothers and three sisters ! She must find in us what fate has taken from her, a true-hearted, loving family, and, thank God, ours is so rich in affection that it is well able to replace all she has lost. . . . I hope, if God wills, to be able to offer her a peaceful haven after all these storms. . . . You cannot imagine with what different feelings and with what increased pleasure and affection I think of our home now, and how much more at home I feel there. My whole being is complete for the first time, and for the first time I am what I ought to be ! Present, past, and future lie more clearly and vividly open to me. I am a man now ! ”

Bernardine also had become engaged to a Dr. Westerkamp, and the wishes which father and brother had cherished for years for her were fulfilled in this engagement. Abeken gained a faithful, brotherly friendship which lasted till his death, Westerkamp only outliving him a few years.

During Abeken's absence from Rome the first symptoms of the serious malady to which Miss Thompson was to succumb in 1835 appeared. She fell ill shortly after his return, from severe inflammation of the lungs. Christmas and the New Year were passed in grave anxiety, and he writes to his father :—

"I have had a trying time. How often have my thoughts turned northwards, and how glad I should have been for a word of comfort from you or from any of our dear ones! The thought of you and of your happiness with Bernardine and her husband was all that cheered me. One feels the absence and the distance at such times as these, and one loses courage to write when one remembers that it takes two weeks for a letter to arrive, and who knows what may have happened by that time! . . . I have got to that pitch about my duties, that I only feel my unfitness for any practical profession. Preaching is not difficult, and I often hear encouraging expressions both from the Germans and the French. I have a fairly regular congregation, and have reason to hope that my preaching is not quite without a blessing. But my relations to individual members of my congregation—this is the difficult thing for me."

*To his Father.*

"THE CAPITOL, *April 23, 1835.*

"It is my fault to be much too inconsiderate about everything. I get arrogant so quickly! There is much in me for God to humble, but pray that He may not chastise me too severely. He has shown me much, too much, mercy, and is now giving me the best of all in my Mary. Pray earnestly that He may give me strength to bear so much mercy, and that it may bear fruit in me to the honour of His name. Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required. Were I a heathen, and believed in Nemesis instead of the fatherly love of God, I might expect chastisement, but thank God I am a Christian, and know that even if sorrow comes, it is not as the punishment of an angry deity, but the admonition of a loving Father.

"The winter half-year is drawing to a close, and with it the first period of my official life—a very disturbed and uneasy one in many ways. . . . The duties of my profession are much lighter in summer, for the regular foreigners leave directly after Easter, and with them a crowd of social duties cease which are altogether unfruitful, and yet take up much time."

The doctor told Abeken, as in duty bound, at the beginning of Miss Thompson's illness, that there was no hope of her recovery, but this only made him hasten on the wedding, so that he might be able to make a home for her. The

marriage, therefore, took place on May 3, 1835. Abeken's married life, though full of sorrow, was also full of love, and day by day the beauty of his wife's unselfish character became increasingly manifest. With infinite patience and strength did this sorely tried woman endure her terrible sufferings, throughout which he was her comfort and support. It is true they enjoyed some days of happiness during their short married life of fifteen months, but even these were fraught with anxiety and care. Frau Bunsen's kindness and wisdom were a help to both, and the active interest she showed was surprising, because her own daughter was lying ill at the same time.

*To his Sister.*

“ROME, June 9, 1835.

“My Dearest, I am feeling daily what the happiness is of such a lasting and intimate union of two hearts, and how entirely different the uninterrupted life together, this life in and with each other, is from that which we call Love before marriage. . . . It is as if each had a double, triple, intensified life. My Mary feels so happy too. For the first time a perfectly new and happy life is beginning for her. . . .”

Abeken and his wife moved to Frascati with the Bunsens, but his duties necessitated his being much in Rome, where additions were being made to the hospital owing to a threatened outbreak of cholera. But this did not occur till some years after.

He and his wife were settled in Rome in September, but Frau Bunsen remained on at Frascati.

*To Frau Bunsen.*

“PALAZZO CAFFARELLI, October 10, 1835.

“It seems an eternity since I exchanged a word with you, and though I have nothing special to say, for my wife told you all there was to tell, I cannot let your husband go without sending a word or two by him. . . . The inward consciousness of our lasting and uninterrupted relations, the certainty that we have an inner life in common, based on our earnestness in advancing towards the same goal (for where this does not exist,

a short space of time suffices to sunder two souls who must needs advance), these things might and ought to be enough. . . . Thus I feel the need of expressing myself to you from time to time.

"I don't feel quite at home here yet—why I don't know. I am severely attacked by my inclination to 'let myself drift,' my besetting sin, but I must get the better of it. . . .

"When you come to Rome you must be my conscience in this matter, and here let me remind you again of *speech*. Though you may act as my conscience by sitting opposite me in silence, or by being present only to my spirit, yet conscience must *speak*—it has more power thus . . . no one else will do it; your husband may now and then, but only by fits and starts, and, believe me, *no one* could do it so effectually as yourself. 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling'—that is what I am going to preach upon to-morrow against myself, and also upon the next verse, which has a most wonderful connection with it. . . ."

In the middle of June Abeken's father wrote that Bernardine's wedding was postponed, and on July 18 he wrote to say that she was ill of low fever. Her usually good health made her father hope for her recovery from month to month. He could not believe that the blooming, happy young life was to pass away, but the wedding had to be put off repeatedly, until at length she was peacefully released from her sufferings. Abeken's father wrote on December 20th:—

"My dearest Heinrich, I cannot write cheerfully to-day. You will have been prepared for what was coming, for my last letter told you that there was no improvement in our dearest Bernardine's condition. . . . My dearest Heinrich, just think that God loved her better than we did, and He wished to take back her whom He had given us. Ought we not to say, The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away; Lord, Thy will be done? Dear Heinrich, the Lord's will is done, the Most Holy has called his child to Himself, she has lived and loved. . . ."

*To his Uncle Rudolph Abeken.*

"ROME, January 12, 1836.

"I cannot cease thanking you and my dear aunt for having at once written to me, and so affectionately and comfortingly,



and for your kind assurance about my poor old father. May God grant him strength and peace ; as yet I *cannot* imagine the extent of my loss—I *dare* not imagine the extent of *his*. But it comforts me to know that he will have your loving care. God help and reward you for it ! A thousand, thousand thanks for your love. Why can I do nothing more ? . . . It is still like a dream to me, the reality can only be felt by degrees. . . .”

Between the yellow pages of Abeken's old letters lay a dry and withered bunch of myrtle, on which was written : “ Bernardine's last adornment.” The lovely young *fiancée* had worn it at a dance in the heyday of her happy youth.

Abeken's letters to his father cease at this time. Those which have been given lay in two little portfolios with a gilt inscription : “ H. Abeken's Berlin and Roman Letters.” They were presents from Bernardine in happier days. Her father carefully collected those belonging to each year, and put the date on them. And only these were found amongst the papers. There were no more after his daughter's death.

It was directly after his sister's death that his wife's greatest suffering began, and his journals contain minute details of the last months, and in them are revealed the fortitude and resignation shown by that pious soul, as well as his own grief. . . . Every day her sufferings grew worse ; she was tormented by the most dreadful attacks of coughing, nervous spasms alternating with excessive exhaustion, which allowed her but little sleep, and when she did sleep she was troubled by the horrible dreams which much use of opium always brings. This struggle with death lasted for months, and she always bore it with the same patience and self-control, often with cheerfulness, while Abeken was indefatigable in his care of her. The Bunsens, Mr. Wigram, and Fräulein von Waitz gave him devoted help in his time of need, and the Bunsens offered him in June some fine, airy rooms in their own home on the Capitol while they made a tour in Naples. So he gratefully moved to “ my mother's house,” whence he sent news of the children who had been left behind in Rome, and reports concerning business connected with the Legation chapel. The Bunsens returned home at

the end of June, and invited Abeken and his wife to stay at Frascati, hoping that the fine air might relieve the sick woman's sufferings, so he took her there early in July, though his duties often called him to Rome. He was due there on August 14, but was persuaded to remain by Frau Bunsen, and at the time he was to have gone, the invalid took his hand and said: "I am so thankful you have not gone. . . ." She was released from her sufferings on August 16th.

The Bunsen family showed him the most affectionate consideration, and Frau Bunsen looked after him like a mother, and there grew up between the two a pure, staunch, and beautiful affection which was a lasting happiness to them through all the vicissitudes of life, a friendship as is only possible between such high-toned and religious characters, fine natures endowed with such versatile gifts.

### *To Frau Bunsen.*

"PALAZZO CAFFARELLI, *August 23, 1836.*

" . . . The fire in my heart has died out, and I am more at home in the churchyard than in my own room. It is a distressing feeling, and when I am alone in the evening and see the moon rise cold above the Aventine, and think of what lies out there beyond it, well, it is enough to tear one's heart out.

" Then when I have been here alone in my room thinking, I am better again, and the feeling of imperishable possession rises triumphant within me. The only bitterness is my uncongenial daily duty, which distracts my thoughts without giving them any adequate or elevating employment. . . .

" The terrible images of death and corruption, of which the mind cannot entirely rid itself, come to me but seldom, and least of all at her grave. . . .

" The best thing I had is not lost to me—this I feel with absolute certainty, for the best in her was not of this world, not peculiar to the natural man, but the gift of and grace of God. I experienced this in her life; I feel the consoling assurance of it now. 'The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.' "

*To Frau Bunsen.*

"PALAZZO CAFFARELLI, September 11, 1836.

" . . . What a solemn time God has sent us ! Of what more solemn a time may it not be the precursor ! In this sorrow for and sympathy with the sufferings of others, in these moments of sadness, I begin really to feel, and to feel daily and hourly, that I am *alone*. Please let me feel that I am not quite alone—do vouchsafe me a line. . . ."

*To Frau Bunsen.*

"ROME, October 27, 1836.

"The morning and evening, before day begins with its regular business routine, and when it comes to an end, and one is one's own master again, these hours are the hardest. One has to begin *by oneself*, and at night to return *to oneself*. Then it is that one first really feels one's loneliness. . . .

"I wish you were here. I feel so lonely without you. The days seem so long, the nights too. . . . I can get no sleep in the desolate, old place."

Great events cast their shadows before. Thus the shadows which sorrow had cast upon Abeken during the past few years were like harbingers of the terrible time which was to come upon Italy and upon Rome especially. In fighting against the general misery, he learned to endure his own grief.

The cholera broke out in Rome in August 1837, and it came with such suddenness that hardly any preventive measures had been taken, thus increasing on the one hand its devastations, while on the other hand the superstitious people found in the Church no protection against the frightfully rapid spread of the scourge. The populace suspected poison and treachery everywhere, first at the hands of the Germans in the hospital which they had established, then from the rich classes of the community. Even the Roman Catholic clergy were not exempt; the excitement increased, and with it the disease. Abeken was obliged to act with great circumspection, for the most necessary actions, such as supplying the poor with wholesome food and providing nurses for the sick, were attended with the

greatest danger, not to himself only, but to the Evangelical Church. Bunsen had been summoned to Berlin by the King in June before the outbreak of the cholera, and his wife and children had gone as usual to Frascati for the summer. Abeken remained in Rome the whole time, but he sent every one out of the city who was not needed to help nurse the sick.

*To Frau Bunsen.*

“ROME, August 14, 1837.

“What do you think of the police station being closed, and the passports being received through a hole after fumigation? This is done at most of the public offices and at the houses of the upper classes. On Sunday the streets were unusually empty; the Madonna having given no aid, the priests got frightened, and few are seen. The doors of many houses which are generally open are now closed, and only opened after much knocking. In consequence, perhaps, of the sanitary commission in the Borgo and Trastevere, the sickness is abating there, and the commission gives active relief to the poor, both in money and food. But nothing is done in the other parts of the town, and the sickness is increasing. . . .”

*To Frau Bunsen.*

“ROME, August 25, 1837.

“Things are very bad in town. The people seldom send for a doctor, and when they do, the police come instead and either remove the sick to the pest-house or drive the family out and leave the sick person to his fate until he is dead, or half dead (and it is said that there are many cases of the kind), when he is dragged off to the cemetery. The doctor tells me that the number is far greater than is announced; no notification is given of most of them, and even the death notices are not given. Funerals are hurried off to the cemetery, and an approximate calculation is drawn up.”

Abeken performed his duties with great devotion. “Nothing is so strengthening,” he writes, “as to feel that life is a duty, and not a pleasure.” His physical and mental



powers were taxed to the uttermost. Not a day passed that he had not to inform Frau Bunsen of the illness or death of some one they knew. There were many victims in the Bunsen household.

Towards the end of November his father wrote to him :—

“ My dearest Heinrich, I received a most delightful letter from Berlin yesterday, from Bunsen, who kindly told me that the King had conferred the Order of the Red Eagle on you in recognition of your noble and devoted conduct during the cholera and as a mark of his special interest and satisfaction. . . .

“ That you would do your duty, I knew, but it is very gratifying to me for it to be recognized particularly from there. I congratulate you with all my heart.”

## CHAPTER V

### BUNSEN LEAVES ITALY

1838-1840

“ Die sich im Geist erkennen  
Und sich in Liebe finden,  
Im Glauben dann verbinden,  
Kann keine Ferne trennen.”—TIECK.

It would be too great a digression to attempt an explanation here of the so-called Köln difficulties to which Bunsen fell a victim; they were partly due to the old dispute about mixed marriages, and partly to a new one concerning the doctrines of the late Professor Hermes,<sup>1</sup> whose disciples went by the name of Hermesians. The deposition of the Archbishop of Köln was attributed to Bunsen, but the affair was decided before his arrival in Berlin, and he could not have prevented it. Although, owing to the severity of the Roman Catholic Church against mixed marriages, no agreement was arrived at between the hostile powers of State and Church, but Bunsen still hoped to gain some influence when he returned to Rome at the end of December. But this hope was shattered. He felt and said that no one could go through a public career without discomforture and wounds, but his fate was a tragic one. He had so often championed the cause of ecclesiastical liberty, and yet he was forced into a position in which both Confessions were against him. It was owing to his personal solicitations to the King that the Roman Catholic soldiers were relieved from the obligation of attending the Protestant service after parade. Herr von Thile<sup>2</sup> accompanied him as Secretary

<sup>1</sup> George Hermes, 1775-1831, attempted in his writings to find a philosophic basis for Roman Catholic doctrine, (dogmatism); his views, which were known under the title of Hermesianismus, were condemned by a Papal Bull in 1835.

<sup>2</sup> Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs under Bismarck.

of Legation in place of Count von Usedom,<sup>1</sup> and they arrived two days before Christmas.

A lifelong friendship was soon established between the new secretary and Abeken.

Bunsen obtained leave to go to England in the spring. The difficulties he encountered and his reasons for leaving the Capitol, that beloved home of twenty-one happy years, are given in detail in his biography.<sup>2</sup> It was an irreparable loss to Abeken, and for the whole circle which had gathered round the Palazzo Caffarelli. And in reply to a friend about things in Rome, Abeken writes: "Everything seems desolate and empty since the Bunsens' departure. They have literally taken a world with them."

*To Frau Bunsen.*

"PALAZZO CAFFARELLI, *June 28, 1838.*

"I spent two days last week in sorting my books, papers, and letters, a thing I could not do without deep feeling. It is strange to live through six years of one's life in this way. But whenever I came across a note of yours it was a ray of sunlight, and what a consolation now that so much is taken from me. God spare you to me, and you will always be my mother, will you not? And I may love you as a *son*. . . ."

*To Frau Bunsen.*

"PALAZZO CAFFARELLI, *July 15, 1838.*

"I have just laid down the 'Messenger' with the long description of the Coronation.<sup>3</sup> Newspaper accounts of festivities are generally tedious, but I read this one with great interest and feeling. The dignity and profound significance of royalty are shown in symbols of intrinsic reality, and the people's living interest is an indication that these sacred, old symbols have not been an empty show, but contain the real thing and are something in themselves. What is most vividly

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<sup>1</sup> Count Guido von Usedom, 1805-1884. In the Ministry of the Interior 1844-5. Then Minister to Rome. Minister to the Confederate States at Frankfort a.M. in 1848. Again Minister at Rome 1849-1854, and at Turin in 1863. Retired in 1869.

<sup>2</sup> Christian Carl Josias, Freiherr von Bunsen. German edition, 1869, pp. 454-594, vol. i.

<sup>3</sup> Coronation of Queen Victoria.

before us is that the king is king *by the* grace of God, a fact wherein is his pride and humility, and I am convinced that the people and the Queen felt this.

"What a grand moment when the Queen swears before her coronation to uphold the rights of the people and the laws of the land! There she appears, as she ought to appear, the protectress of liberty. And she is such a sweet young girl, too. God bless her and be her guide! I cannot think of her without exclaiming that, and I could not read the passage without being deeply touched."

A few hours after Bunsen's departure the Papal Government attempted to close the German Protestant chapel in the Palazzo Caffarelli, but a decided protest from the Chargé d'Affaires, Herr von Buch, obliged the *carabinieri* to withdraw from the chapel door.

Abeken writes on June 23rd:—

"We are hoping for peace here as the affairs on the Rhine seem to be quieting down, but we look with alarm towards Eastern affairs, and cannot conceal from ourselves that there is a volcano there which there is no use trying to stop, and which may blow us up sky-high."

By the doctor's advice Abeken took a five weeks' holiday with some acquaintances in Sicily, leaving his duties to the care of the Protestant minister in Naples.

*To Frau Bunsen.*

"ROME, November 25, 1838.

"I am eager to see the Englishman, Gladstone,<sup>1</sup> of whom your husband speaks. I shall be very curious to read his book.<sup>2</sup> The Tories set great hopes on him.

"There still exists in your country the feeling that a nation should be a whole, an individual, a person, both in ecclesiastical affairs and temporal, and this is the true idea of Church and State. It ceases when the nation is divided into different religious confessions. This was the case for a long while in Great Britain, but was ignored, but since the Roman Catholic

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<sup>1</sup> W. E. Gladstone.

<sup>2</sup> *The State in its Relations with the Church.* London, 1838.



emancipation it can be ignored no longer, but there is still among the greater number of the nation at least, a consciousness that it is an evil ; and there is the feeling that the real life of the nation, not only the masses, the numerical pluralities, but the spirit of the nation, belongs to the Church, and that which constitutes them a nation is the Church."

The time expired in 1838 during which Abeken had undertaken the chaplaincy to the Prussian Legation, and his friends thought he ought to return home and devote his powers to his self-chosen calling, that of a theological professor. It was, however, just during these years, 1838-1840, that the religious struggles threatened to drive the Evangelical Church from Rome, and Abeken, having by his long residence there gained a knowledge of the difficult conditions, thought he was needed there. After examining his actions in the sight of God, and realizing the justice of them, he stuck to them with iron determination.

*To Frau Bunsen.*

" ROME, *January 3, 1839.*

" I will just suggest a picture to you by saying that I have just returned with Gladstone from the Colosseum which was illuminated by brightest moonlight. He is a splendid man. If it were not that you need him at home, I should be very sad for him to go so soon."

*To Frau Bunsen.*

" ROME, *January 18, 1839.*

" Our position here seems desperate, though in strict confidence the world believes it to be the reverse, but we were all hopeful a few days ago. I trust we may eventually arrive at something definite. . . .

" Social duties are worse than ever. It was a real treat to go to the Villa Ludovisi, whither I could not resist taking Gladstone, and he enjoyed it thoroughly. . . ."

*To Frau Bunsen.*

" PALAZZO CAFFARELLI, *March 24, 1839.*

" . . . I accept your advice about going to England with gratitude, and as an expression of my own feeling. I have often said just the same thing to myself, and more strongly in the face

of tempting invitations. I know quite well that England can be of no use to me now, but rather harm. Now I need to study quietly and seriously, and God will grant me a peaceful summer for it somewhere, by preference in Rome. Therefore I must not so much as think of the joy which no words can describe, of *seeing you in England.*"

Abeken again turned his attention to literary work, and writing to Frau Bunsen, in January 1840, he says —

"I have taken up again the oldest constitution of the Church, and the rise of the Episcopate, which I must systematically develop into a book on the Church. The translation of Gladstone<sup>1</sup> has been finished long ago. I have nothing to say against printing it, but I am convinced it will have no effect in Germany. . . . In the summer I wrote a long disquisition upon the relations between Church and State, but I am so dissatisfied with it that I must leave it alone and first develop the subject historically. . . ."

*To Frau Bunsen.*

"CASINO SPADA, *July 21, 1840.*

"The various excitements<sup>2</sup> through which you have lived have stirred us all. . . .

"Were you not delighted with his excellent introductory words to his father's will? That such words should come in these days from the lips of a king, is enough almost to cheat one with a gleam of hope that something good may come to pass even in our time. But alas, 'dear, fond, delusive hope!' No, one must not hope, for hope makes one weak; despair alone is strengthening. He who hopes nothing, and desires nothing but to perish fighting for the right, is invincible."

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<sup>1</sup> Gladstone's book on Church and State.

<sup>2</sup> Referring to the death of Friedrich Wilhelm III.

## CHAPTER VI

### DEATH OF HIS FATHER—OSNABRÜCK— BERLIN AND ENGLAND

1840-1842

“ Lord, I believe ! Help Thou my unbelief.”

ANY anxieties entertained by Abeken's friends as to his future career were solved, and, as so often happens, in a totally unexpected way, by the sudden death of his father.

He had been subject to fainting attacks before his daughter's death, but otherwise his health was extraordinarily robust, though that very excess of vital energy often contains in itself the germ of sudden death, and might well have aroused apprehension both in himself and in his son. The strong oak is broken by the storm which bends the shaking reed. His father loved long quiet walks, as did Abeken also, and it was during one of these lonely rambles that his father, in the doctor's opinion, had a stroke which proved immediately fatal.

*From his Uncle Rudolf to Abeken.*

“ OSNABRÜCK, *November 22, 1840.*

“ By the time you receive this, dear Heinrich, you will have been apprised of your sad bereavement. You will be assured of the sorrow and sympathy of your family, and it is heartily shared by the whole town to a degree seldom experienced, by both old and young. From his letters you knew that your father was in good health, and that he attended to his duties, often arduous enough, with his wonted energy. . . . One may say in the fullest sense of the words, that his life really consisted in making others happy by serving and helping them. How many have said this to me, both high and low ! His whole being was made up of kindness. I have never known his like.”

*Uncle Rudolf to Abeken.*

“OSNABRÜCK, *January 3, 1841.*

“Do not overwork yourself. Eleven sermons a week are too much. Think of us and take care of your health. We have always been united, and the love of your never-to-be-forgotten father makes us doubly so.”

*To Frau Bunsen.*

“PALAZZO CAFFARELLI, *January 30, 1841.*

“... God has, indeed, sent me a heavy trial. It is as though a bit of firm earth had been drawn from under my feet, and I have therefore the greater need to cling to the support from above. . . .

“It is hard to be at a distance at such a time, but it has spared me the hardest part. Only think, the dear body was not found till a week after death, in the water; the stroke must have come on him while he was taking his favourite walk on the banks, for all the doctors agree that death took place *before* he fell into the water, there being no trace of a struggle there, and they are certain that he had an apoplectic fit. . . . He had complained only the day before of pressure on his head. My uncle did not write till the body was found. What days he must have passed! . . .

“I have had a fairly busy winter. The number of Germans and French is greater than ever, and some eighty of the former and about sixty French come to church. . . .

“I shall have to go to Osnabrück, but I dread it. They urge me to come. . . .”

He obtained leave to go home to attend to business and spent some time with his uncle. His health had been impaired ever since his excessive exertions in Rome in 1835, and he suffered a good deal from fever even after his return to Germany.

In the autumn of 1839 Bunsen had been appointed Minister to Switzerland, where he lived in a charming country-house on the Bernese Oberland. But his stay there was not destined to be of long duration, for he was called to Berlin by Friedrich Wilhelm IV., in 1841.

The Bunsens had long feared that Abeken might become too much wedded to Italy, and in the charms of “that



land of the blest," lose his best qualities and powers, or at least fail, as many another had failed, to develop them to their utmost capacity, and they were also concerned about his health. Their affectionate letters contained warnings, and Bunsen suggested taking him to England when appointed to a Mission there. The suggestion gradually took definite shape. The liturgical work begun under Friedrich Wilhelm III. had to be continued, and the new thoughts on the question of Church and State which had arisen during Bunsen's stay in Berlin required working out. The attention of Friedrich Wilhelm IV. had been directed to Jerusalem, where he wished to establish a common ground for the activities of the Evangelical Church, as well as a point of union for the German and English nations, and Bunsen was chosen to carry out the project. The King's real object was a united action on the part of the English Church and the German Evangelical Church, a spiritual institution to be the work of both. This was the fundamental idea of the bishopric of Jerusalem, and at that time they could not, of course, do more than sow the seed in the hope of an increase later on.

Abeken went to Berlin in July and was presented to the King, and then returned to Osnabrück, still suffering from fever.

Bunsen wrote to him saying :—

"I have a few moments of leisure, and they belong to you. I must thank you for your affection and tell you what a fright I was in about your illness. How can you think of returning this summer while so pulled down by fever? It is wantonly going into an open grave. Give, sacrifice all you hold most dear, and, if for your good, you will receive it again from His hands, as certainly as Christ died for us. But do not fly in the Almighty's face. Do not disregard the serious *warning* he gives you in this fever, and in the German patriotism with which you are imbued. You must on no account return before autumn. Meanwhile go with me to London. I am going (like the Coronation Ministers), as Envoyé extraordinaire en mission spéciale pour Sa Majesté le Roi de Prusse, for six or eight weeks."

When also the doctor declared against his going to Italy for the time being, Abeken obtained further leave of

six weeks from his duties at Rome. Considering his usually sanguine temperament, his freshness of mind, and cheerful vitality, the tone of weariness which had pervaded his letters for several years seemed unnatural, and it was therefore fortunate for him that this prolonged leave should come to make a turning-point in his life. The change of air, the utterly different mental interests and occupations, serious though they might be, restored to him his former strength and elasticity.

Bunsen could scarcely have foreseen that by this step his young friend would be drawn from his theological career to a purely political one, but it was the result which followed his taking this step that Abeken was led to devote himself to his King and country, and to serve Church and State with the full powers of mind and body in the most varied circumstances and at the most important junctures.

*To Frau Bunsen.*

“GÖTTINGEN, *July 24, 1841.*

“A variety of things delayed the settling of my business at Osnabrück, so I determined to visit my uncle at Dresden, whom I had not seen for fourteen years. Then I went to Berlin and on to Osnabrück, and rapidly wound up affairs. I spent a pleasant week in Dresden and met Semper<sup>1</sup> again; he sent you his grateful remembrances. He is a very able man, and has designed some admirable buildings in Dresden. I had a good deal of talk with him about ecclesiastical architecture, and he said: ‘Give me a liturgy, and I will build you a church.’ That shows sense. He ought to go to Berlin.

“I was received with great cordiality by Usedom in Berlin, and very civilly by Werther, who informed the King of my arrival, and I was commanded to dine on the 12th, but an attack of fever obliged me to excuse myself, and it was Friday before I could report myself as well again. I dined at San Souci on Saturday. The King—well, what shall I say of him? What is the use of mentioning my delight with him? He took me aside after dinner and asked why I had not gone to England, and I gave the reason you know, and he did not disapprove, and only jokingly remarked that he thought it was Roman fever.

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<sup>1</sup> Gottfried Semper, 1803–1879. Celebrated architect. Built and designed buildings for Dresden, Munich, Zürich, and Vienna.

"There was a good deal of talk about our relations with England, and what we should learn from her, how little we knew of England or how to honour her, and he regretted greatly that the German Church did not yet see a way out of its difficulties. He said he had almost lost patience, but could only look after the State according to his convictions; and he said it all in the most original, forcible, and genial manner. . . .

"Shall I confess that it gives me not a little satisfaction that every one<sup>1</sup> approves of my not wishing to go to England for only two or three months? The King before he saw me informed Usedom that he wanted to send me to England for a longer time, and Eichhorn<sup>2</sup> told me, without mentioning the King, that he hoped I could go, and that he thought that a way would be opened for my remaining there a longer time. I said I was most willing.

"Thus the affair stands. If the King is serious, it is *possible* I may not return to Rome, but go to England in the autumn. But Eichhorn's intention seemed to be that I should go back to Rome to make a special study of Roman institutions for some months, and then go to England. My movements must be made to depend on this.

"My own idea is that if I don't go to England, to resign my post at Rome next Easter and go to a German university where I shall do nothing for at least a 'twelve-month' but study, though the King did say that there were more to teach than to learn in Germany. I wonder if these plans will please you better?"

After all these fluctuations Abeken finds a quiet moment on board the steamship *Neptune* to write to his uncle Christel at Dresden:—

"... You must not mind if these lines get rather wavy, but consider that this is the characteristic of things on the North Sea. I believe I am still surprised at finding myself here. Notwithstanding the excellent prospects in England, I yearn for Rome, partly because Rome is Rome, where the hallowed tranquillity of its former greatness suits me better and is dearer to me than the bustling pomp and splendour of present-day

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<sup>1</sup> By every one is meant, the King, Eichhorn, and Usedom.

<sup>2</sup> Johann Albert Friedrich Eichhorn, 1779-1856. Prussian statesman, Minister of Public Worship, 1840-1848.

greatness and power such as London has to offer, and partly because I long for the quiet work of my own vocation. . . .”

*To his Uncle Christel Abeken.*

“ 15, SOUTH AUDLEY STREET, LONDON,  
*September 22, 1841.*

“ So here I am in the metropolis, and ‘ well and comfortably lodged ’ with Bunsen to begin with. He is stopping here till the 19th, and perhaps until the end of October, and I stay with him till then. After that I must look out for a room here in the aristocratic West End of the town, for one cannot live anywhere else. The merchants do not live in the horrible, dank, close, smoky, noisy City, though their business is there, but in the country about London, and even the clerks and tradespeople only come in for business hours, the means of doing so being easy and regular. All the ‘ outskirts ’ of London are surrounded by numbers of small houses standing in pretty little gardens. Every Englishman, if he has a family, requires a house, no matter how small. To live on *étages* here would be the same as living in a hotel. These garden dwellings are exceedingly conducive to comfort and health. It is pleasant here in the West End, where we are living in the very fashionable part ; the streets are regular, clean, and airy, and at short intervals there are squares with lovely green lawns and shrubs and flowers. All the surrounding houses have keys to these quiet enclosures, so that the children can play there all day long as if in a private garden. Close by are those lovely parks, St. James’s Park, Hyde Park, Regent’s Park, of whose beauty no one has an idea till he has seen them, and which bring the solitude and pleasure of the country into the midst of the town, and where cattle graze amidst a wealth of greenery under the beautiful trees. Only the magnificent towers of Westminster Abbey rising far above the trees remind one that one is in town. Just imagine this large garden set down in the middle of Dresden ! Everything is delightfully near, and some friends live within easy distance. It is not more than half-an-hour’s walk to the Athenæum Club, where I was introduced yesterday, and where I can read, write, work, and have lunch cheaply—where, in short, I can live most splendidly. So I am not badly off to begin with.

“ I was in London on Tuesday, September 7, at eleven in the morning, and six hours later I was out of town on my way to Addington Park, the charming country home of His Grace



the Archbishop of Canterbury, where we spent two days with the reverend old man in the tranquillity of a country clergyman's home. It was a good beginning in England. I will not describe the park nor the beautiful country through which I travelled on Saturday the 11th, on my way to Rugby in Warwickshire, where we paid a visit to Dr. Arnold, the headmaster of one of the largest English schools, and one of the most remarkable men in England, with whom we spent a delightful Sunday. Imagine our Westphalian country, with its isolated houses, its fields and trees, only everything more luxuriant, more fruitful, greener, and more cultivated. Rugby School (it has from 350 to 360 boys) is a fine building in the most appropriate Gothic architecture, which was newly built twenty years ago close to the town, among green pastures over-shadowed by fine masses of trees, where the 'rooks in social concourse wheel their flight.' I cannot deny that I feel at home. We got back to London on Monday the 13th, where we have been ever since."

Before his journey to England, Abeken had brought out a little book entitled, *To my Brethren of the Lutheran Confession*, Osnabrück, 1841. It was a proposal for divine service to be the outcome of real Christian life, founded on the Gospel in its simplest and most natural acceptance.

Bunsen, Abeken, and others, with the favour of those sovereigns who had the Christian welfare of their subjects at heart, were indefatigable in their endeavours to restore the Church to a form which should be comprehensible to rich and poor alike, and to imbue it with a new heart and life demanding a really effectual piety and morality from the people. Much was accomplished. By their efforts the old inspiring hymns were restored in their integrity. Abeken wished to make both hymns and sermons shorter, and he preferred a little with real devotion than much with halting powers, for he did not regard divine service as something received, but as an individual act, though essentially an act common to all.

In the winter of 1842, he was on a visit to Berlin and Osnabrück, when he writes to his uncle Christel Abeken:—

"You know, of course, that my special business in England was to work with and for Bunsen on behalf of the Evangelical

bishopric established at Jerusalem. This is now nearly at an end, and on my return to England I shall only study Church institutions there, probably for another year. Then I shall return to Germany, but where I shall take root, God knows better than I, for I am a homeless wanderer, and am content to be so."

Abeken was present at the christening of the Prince of Wales. During his stay in England he met several English families whom he had known in Rome, and made the acquaintance of others, among them, Henry and Thomas Acland,<sup>1</sup> the Knights and Verneys,<sup>2</sup> Gladstone, Dr. Arnold, and the Puseys. Among the Germans there he met Prince Pückler<sup>3</sup> and Cornelius Ritter.<sup>4</sup>

Of the innumerable pamphlets written at this time by Abeken were the following: "*A Letter to the Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D., concerning certain charges against the German Church contained in his Letter to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury.* By the Rev. H. Abeken., Theol. Lic., Chaplain to His Prussian Majesty's Legation at Rome." London, John W. Parker, West Strand, 1842. Also, *The Evangelical Bishopric in Jerusalem: An historical exposition, with documentary evidence.* Berlin, W. Besser, 1842. Abeken participated in the strenuous work of Bunsen, who, with a mind always occupied, could scarcely imagine any one being unoccupied. It was not Bunsen's position alone, but his remarkable personality, which rendered many things accessible to Abeken, for in London, as in Rome, it was Bunsen who was the centre of attraction.

Abeken was in Berlin again in the spring of 1842.

<sup>1</sup> "The Aclands' place is a model of the dwelling, the life, the work, the charitable deeds of an English country gentleman's family; and one feels that here lies the strength of England, and here its blessings have their root." Bunsen's Biography, ii. 82.

<sup>2</sup> In the same letter, Bunsen writes (p. 87): "After a busy week we went to stay with Sir Harry Verney, the patriarchal master of Claydon, and his cultivated, intellectual wife."

<sup>3</sup> Hermann, Prince von Pückler-Muskau, 1785-1871.

<sup>4</sup> Karl Ritter, 1779-1859, geographer, and founder of the system of comparative geography.

*To Bunsen.*

“BERLIN, *April* 28, 1842.

“I dined with the King at Potsdam on Friday. He was in good spirits, but conversed, of course, only on indifferent subjects across the table. I was well placed between Colonel Gerlach<sup>1</sup> and Voss.<sup>2</sup> The King called Gerlach and me into his study after dinner. He kept on regretting that you were not here in the winter to tell the facts about the bishopric, though it was still possible then, but too late now to do it officially. He was glad that I was writing on the subject. Gerlach quite agreed. He had read my *Letter* and recommended it to the King. He would agree to that sort of bishopric with all his heart; thought it ought to be translated—that it would have the best effect. . . .

“The most important thing the King said was that he had issued a decree for the separation of the ‘Consistorialpräsidenten’ from the ‘Oberpräsidenten.’ This is a great move. I could not get him on the subject of the Liturgy, I am sorry to say. . . .

“A few persons have taken up the Köln Cathedral lottery with enthusiasm, but most people say it is a wild idea. The *Antigone* is to be given again three times this week. Thile says it makes him feel more devout than being in church.”

*To Bunsen.*

“BERLIN, *May* 11, 1842.

“How can one speak of anything but of the one subject that fills every heart and mind, the awful judgment the Lord has sent upon Hamburg?<sup>3</sup> Yet somehow one feels that one ought not to talk, but to stretch forth one’s hands silently and help.

“Every possible thing is being done here. The King has acted in a manner entirely worthy of him; his fine proclamation must have been written by himself. . . . He has sent two thousand five hundred thalers and quantities of provisions, troops—of which there is great need to keep order—engineers, pioneers, &c. Three shiploads of provisions were despatched yesterday, with

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<sup>1</sup> Leopold von Gerlach, 1790–1861. Colonel and Chief of the General Staff of the Third Army Corps (since 1838), and Adjutant-General to the King in 1850. An influential member of the so-called “Camarilla,” and an opponent of Radowitz’s German policy.

<sup>2</sup> President of the Consistory.

<sup>3</sup> A terrible fire lasting from May 5 to May 8, which utterly destroyed portions of the town.

clothes, bedding, bread, and grain. Immense crowds thronged to the receiving stations, and the people, with tears in their eyes, vied with each other about their contributions. . . ."

*To Bunsen.*

"BERLIN, June 8, 1842.

" . . . It is extraordinary how few signs there are in church of any vital development in dogmatic teaching. On the one hand there is only the most inflexible adherence to the old literal interpretations ; on the other, all is in a state of disintegration and dissolution. A bad state of things. The clergy here seem to me to be a wretchedly poor lot, and church-going a penance. No spirituality either among clergy or laity. . . .

"Lepsius is rushing about like a roaring lion getting ready for his journey. God knows how I should like to be off with him to the desert !

"Cornelius has been working on the finest thing he has ever done, the decorations of a silver shield for the Prince of Wales." <sup>1</sup>

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, June 28, 1842.

"Lepsius leaves for London *via* Hamburg on July 8, and he leaves London on August 1, by steamer for Malta and Alexandria. If one could only go too. . . . Everything is topsyturvey here in Germany, and had I ever experienced sea-sickness, I should say I was sea-sick, and we are still, alas, far from land ; neither is there any hope of a stiff breeze ; we drift on, driven hither and thither aimlessly, the sport of the bewildering waves."

Abeken went to England again in the summer to see Bunsen on business, and while there began his plans for a journey to Egypt. On his return, he was sent with despatches to the King, who was on the Rhine, and writes to Bunsen :—

"BENRATH, near DUSSELDORFF, August 29, 1842.

"I will begin a letter, but I shall not post it until I see the King again, for, incredible as it sounds, I have seen him once

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<sup>1</sup> A present from his godfather, King Friedrich Wilhelm IV.



already and had an hour's interview, and I am going to read the paper before him to-morrow.<sup>1</sup> This is an extremely lucky chance for me, but it is the result of a slight misfortune—an attack of the gout which obliged our dear, good King to keep his bed for a day or so. . . .”

In 1842 Bunsen fulfilled his long-cherished plan of sending a scientific expedition under Lepsius to Egypt and Ethiopia, and Abeken, who had been somewhat despondently wondering whether he should ever be of any service to his country, particularly as a theologian, was much gratified by an offer to join this expedition as attaché to the Prussian Legation in Rome, with a subsidy from the King, and he accepted the appointment at once. The King desired him to visit those countries for the purpose of serious theological research, coupled with investigations of a purely scientific character. He returned by way of Jerusalem on account of matters connected with the furtherance of the bishopric scheme.

Writing to Bunsen from Berlin, he says :—

“ The King was most gracious. He gave me leave of absence from my chaplaincy at Herr von Bülow's suggestion, allowing me to remain in that character as attaché to the Legation in Rome, and granting me two thousand thalers a year for two years for travelling expenses. This exceeds my wildest dreams.”

Shortly before leaving Berlin he writes to his uncle :—

“ Linger on here is not exactly pleasant, and the ground burns under my feet as though it were the sand of the desert. What an odd place is this Berlin ! Such a fund of intellectual activity, so much that is good and agreeable about the people, and yet, on the whole, what an oppressive and cheerless atmosphere ! ”

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<sup>1</sup> *The Jerusalem Bishopric.*

## CHAPTER VII

### EGYPT AND THE DESERT OF SINAI—JERUSALEM

1842-1845

IT would encroach too much on the time and space at our disposal were we to attempt to follow closely the events of Abeken's daily life as given in his journals and letters at this period. We shall, therefore, confine ourselves to such brief extracts as possess the most immediate interest.

The contribution of Lepsius in 1852 to the subject of the expedition appeared under the title of *Letters from Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Sinaitic Peninsula*, a work containing concise records of research combined with vivid pictures of the countries traversed. It is a matter of regret from a scientific point of view, says Karl Ritter, that Abeken's writing in connection with the expedition should not also have been given to the public. The results of his investigations are comprised in the following treatises : <sup>1</sup>—

- (1) The Isthmus of Suez and the Exodus.
- (2) The Wanderings of the Children of Israel as far as Sinai.
- (3) The Children of Israel and their Place in the History of Egypt.

Writing at Christmas 1842 to his uncle Christel Abeken, from his tent at the base of the Great Pyramid, Abeken says :—

“ I went to see the Christmas-tree lit up in the huge granite chamber built for our purpose by King Cheops five thousand years ago, Divine Providence supplying us with a palm-tree which we decorated with candles and festoons of raisins, figs, dates, in real German fashion. I sat there a long while in the heart of the Great Pyramid, 'mid the deathly solitudes of that mighty granite sepulchre, the sarcophagus of King Cheops serving

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<sup>1</sup> Also his large work, *Recollections of Egypt and Ethiopia*.

me as a table. All was still and silent as the grave, but I busied myself with the childish occupation of stringing dates together for the tree which the Arabs were dragging with great difficulty through the long passages into the recesses of the colossal pile.

“What varying feelings passed through me, both sad and joyous, despondency mingled with gratitude! How my thoughts flew far afield, away from the silent tomb, back to many a spot fraught with dear and hallowed memories, but it is better not to dwell on them. . . .”

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“EBENDA, *January 4, 1843.*

“With swelling hearts we welcomed in the New Year in the most festive and original way with huge bonfires on the top of all three pyramids, and drank the health of absent friends at midnight, on New Year’s Eve. . . . The smooth, outer casing is still preserved in the upper portion of the second pyramid, making the summit well-nigh inaccessible, but this is rather blunted as two or three of the last stones are missing. Lepsius is the only one of us who has been to the top except some of the more venturesome of the Arabs. One of the latter carried up the wood, and had to sleep there, on a space only a few feet square, at a height of 450 feet, being unable to get down in the dark. The rest of us only ascended the second pyramid as far as the beginning of the casing, and we found it difficult to get that far. It was a unique spectacle, that of the three flames flaring up above as though minded to reach the stars, casting a wondrous flickering light from one pyramid to the other. . . .

“Our mighty colony is composed of many elements. Lepsius, our commander-in-chief, is admirably suited for an expedition of this sort, being endowed with such alertness and energy of mind and body, that he is always to the fore in surmounting difficulties, and generally succeeds in making them vanish. Besides this, he has plenty of quickness and cheerful courage, is perfectly natural, straightforward, and downright, and in short, he is the very man for the position. He has stuck to his European clothes, and wears a linen blouse and a broad-brimmed felt hat. Other members of the expedition are Erb-kamm, a nephew of the Minister, Eichhorn, or rather of his wife, a clever, capable, pleasant fellow, not exactly a genius, but an accurate, industrious worker. . . . Frey, an artist from Basel, very clever, especially as a colourist, a skilful draughtsman

as well, but a little bit *manière* ; Max and Ernst Weidenbach, two nice young draughtsmen from Naumburg—Max, the younger, invaluable for drawing hieroglyphics, in which he has acquired much skill and sureness of touch under Lepsius ; and Francke, an expert in plaster casts and clever at all kinds of mechanical contrivances.

“ Besides these, there have joined the expedition as volunteers : Bonomi, who works for it in return for his expenses, a native of England of Italian extraction ; he was formerly nine years in Egypt, knows the language, is acquainted with all the known monuments, and is the cleverest draughtsman in Egyptian style to be found. He is a perfectly invaluable member of our company, if only as interpreter, besides being an excessively agreeable man and most good-tempered. He is full of little jokes, mostly Oriental, and for that matter, all his habits are more those of an Eastern than a European. He dresses Turkish, or rather Arab, fashion, and tries to make us adopt Eastern costume. Then there is Dr. Wylde, a young English architect . . . and, last of all, your affectionate nephew, *per servirla*, in a pair of long, ready-made European slops, red Turkish slippers with turned-up toes, a long-sleeved Arab waistcoat, and over it a gaudy shawl for girdle. When it is cold he wears a Greek fisherman's cloak ; when warm, no coat at all. On his head a Greek fez, sometimes a turban, the latter affording some shade and protection to his eyes. In this guise he generally rides on his own grey horse, an excellent beast.

“ The above company are encamped at the foot of the pyramids. Five tents, blue inside, except that of Lepsius, which is blue inside and out, are pitched in a hollow directly in front of the second pyramid, close to the Sphinx, whose head rises above the low rubbish-heap around her. Alongside is the Prussian flag, grand and fine, but only unfurled on Sundays and holidays. The fifth tent is used for divine service and for dining-room.”

*To Frau von Bunsen.*

“ EBENDA, Sunday, January 8, 1843.

“ To be here in the desert, amid the silent workshops of nature, where those stupendous works by the hand of man in the earliest days of his dawning consciousness have almost the appearance of nature's own works, is indeed a strange experience. They are mighty structures, these pyramids, with



their enormous masses and plain, mathematical simplicity of form, a simplicity of an absolutely inorganic kind. Man's first problem was to render mass subservient to the simple laws of proportion, and in this he has succeeded. It is the mass which has such an imposing effect. . . .

"How different is the case of Gothic architecture! There intellect has completely annihilated the mere mass. With an infinite wealth of development, the outcome of exuberant vitality, it has succeeded in evolving from it a form no longer mathematical, but organic, and conferred upon it an actual organic existence, causing it to rise free and unfettered in defiance of its own laws, just as the compelling force in the living organisms of the plant-world urges them upwards towards the sky and the light, regardless of the laws of matter and gravitation. There everything is form; mass is nothing. Take the choir of Köln Cathedral, for instance. There are no walls, only pillars with interspaces of coloured light. Midway between the two styles comes the Grecian, especially the Doric architecture, in which there prevails a glorious harmony and most perfect counterpoise between mass and form. Well, I have seen the Parthenon, but I cannot speak of it. All I can say is that there it stands—it exists, and exists for eternity. It could not possibly be other than it is, and no man can ever add to, or take aught from it. One can make many fine observations and reflections on the subject of Gothic architecture, but at sight of the Parthenon all speech, all thought, is at an end. One's whole being seems made up of a single sense, that of vision, and this one sense seems to include all the rest:

"Die Säule tönt, und der Triglyphe klingt; ich glaube gar, der ganze Tempel singt."<sup>1</sup>

*To Frau von Bunsen.*

"SAGÂRA, February 18, 1843.

"... When you think of me you must imagine my tent clinging on to a little terrace half-way up the face of a steep precipice on the borders of the Libyan desert. A splendid view to the east, the fruit-trees and palms of the rich valley of the Nile at my feet; over the site of the once proud Memphis are palm-groves, and away to the lofty range of the Mekkottam mountains, that from morning till night gleam with ever-varying

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<sup>1</sup> Not quite a verbal quotation from *Faust*, Part II.

enchantment of iridescent hues. Behind us the rock rises sheer up to the plateau. On the top is the desert necropolis, where for generation after generation Memphis laid her dead to rest. You cannot imagine anything more appalling than the desolation and the number of low rubbish-heaps, from which rise a couple of equally miserable pyramids, making it more horrible than the real desert."

Abeken received the news of the death of his cousin Wilhelm<sup>1</sup> about this time, and the blow fell on him like a thunder-bolt. It was little more than a year since he had lost his cousin Fritz, both sons of his uncle Rudolf, the companions of his childhood and early youth, and he looked upon them as brothers. With Wilhelm he had lived for a long while in Rome, had met both brothers again in Berlin, and was doubly attached to them from the fact of his own lonely life. He felt the more grief as, being away from home, he could be of no service to his uncle.

The following letters explain the object of his journey to Egypt :—

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"SAGÂRA, March 26, 1843.

" . . . You wish an answer to your question as to the real object of my journey. I felt that I must strike out a new line in life. I wanted to devote myself to the study of history for the future, and to acquire a knowledge of the intellectual life of the ancients and the growth of the human race. Not that I imagined knowledge would be the salvation of the world, or provide a solution for the needs of our time, or, indeed, for my own needs. . . .

"As I wished for a change, I felt I could have it by making a complete break, so I threw myself heart and soul into the pursuit of one object, and severed the threads which bound me. . . .

"Now you have the secret of my flight into Egypt. Whether I shall ever return to the Western world depends on God's guidance. . . ."

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Wilhelm Abeken read under Gerhard in Rome, was second secretary of the Archæological Institute in Rome, and member of the Herculaneum Academy at Naples. He died at Munich, aged 29. He wrote on the ancient inhabitants of Etruria and middle Italy at the time of the Roman supremacy.

The mere fact of travelling in itself opened to Abeken a whole world of new ideas, and a knowledge of the monuments and culture of a bygone age helped to further his historical studies.

*To Frau von Bunsen.*

“ON THE NILE, August 11, 1843.

“I have not yet been able to form any proper conception of Arabian civilisation under the Caliphs. The remains of their architecture, rich as they are in ornamental detail, do not, as a whole, present the free and sublime forms of that liberating and elevating tendency with which Heaven seems to have endowed Greek and Christian architecture. I felt this most strongly during my last days in Cairo. I was delighted with the rich adornment of the buildings. You cannot imagine anything more decorative, more charming, than the coloured carving in wood and stone, composed of mathematical lines entwined in thousands of artistic convolutions, with hardly a single element of the organic or even vegetable life, which supplies such beautiful patterns to the Greek and German architecture. Yet these lines almost seem to create a life of their own, to become something of a living organism and to shape themselves, as it were, unconsciously, into vegetable forms. There is nothing elevating in their mosques, nothing that appears to be the outcome of inspiration or enthusiasm in the literal sense of the word. One is pleased and delighted with the gay devices, but they suggest no aspiration after higher things.

“The domestic and private architecture is incomparable, however, and it is a pity that, owing to the light methods of building in Cairo and the utter neglect of all ancient things, that hardly anything remains of the good old days, for even in the houses of the last century there is much that is beautiful though mixed with the encroachments of a barbarous element which only too soon gained an ascendancy over the traditions of good style.”

*To Frau von Bunsen.*

“ON THE NILE BETWEEN THEBES<sup>1</sup> AND ESNEB,<sup>2</sup>

October 19, 1843.

“... We must hasten south. The north wind is leaving us

<sup>1</sup> Between the present ruins of Luxor, Karnak, and Medinet Habu.

<sup>2</sup> In Upper Egypt.

now for days at a time, and at the present moment our boats are gliding slowly along shore, towed by sailors to the accompaniment of a monotonous song which the increasing heat will soon put a stop to. I am sitting in the shade on an airy balcony in front of my cabin.

"You know that Lepsius left Cairo on August 16, but I stayed on till the 21st, leaving in the evening for Ben-Suef, where I arrived on the 22nd, Lepsius getting there the next morning. With our boats gaily bedecked with flags and pennons, we moved up-stream against the ever-increasing tide. We gave up the land journey first because it had nothing more to offer us, and also because it was impossible during the inundation.

"Our poor men have to work all day long since the beginning of Ramadan, the Mohammedan month of fast, without indulging in so much as a drink of water or touching a bit of bread. They observe the fast strictly, but are always merry, though on the journey they seldom have a chance of enjoying themselves at night.

"I still cannot altogether understand the power that Islamism exercises over men's minds. To our notions, it seems to have so very little connection with the deep needs, fears and feelings of humanity, between which and the Christian religion there is so intimate a bond. . . . The historical fact which forms the basis of Christianity is both human and divine; the historical facts of Islam do not even claim to be divine, and yet there is little that is human about them—they are so cold, so dead. Now in Christianity the past is constantly becoming a present fact upon which all our festivals depend; in Islam, the past is altogether past, scarcely linked, even by memory, with the present: its festivities, founded on air, are quite arbitrary, and not connected in any way with human interests, only with natural phenomena, and not with these in the largest sense. Still, we must guard against any injustice to Islam, its wonderful power over men's minds, and which, despite its hollowness, has characteristics that are pre-eminently noble and holy; this alone should warn us not to judge too hastily. Islamism in its institutions is *conservative* beyond anything of which we have any experience; it knows no progress, and it possesses no future. It was not a progressive step in the intellectual development of the human race (though it may well have been so in that of the peoples among whom it arose), and it is not, therefore, a revelation at all, but a retrogression, and a



retrogression to the Old Testament of the Father without the Son, who is consequently not a Father but a Master."

*To Bunsen.*

"KOROSKO, NUBIA, *November 24, 1843.*

"To be transported all at once from the silent desert into a region filled with the strenuous life and activities of two countries has a very odd effect upon one.

"We left Philæ<sup>1</sup> on the 6th, with a large boat for the expedition party, and a little nutshell for me, and went up through the valley of the Nubian Nile.

"One is filled with a profound melancholy at seeing the numerous traces of a former reign of Christianity in the ruined churches and chapels, Coptic inscriptions, and pictures of the saints, which are often painted over those of the old gods and kings. . . ."

*To Frau von Bunsen.*

"EBENDA, *Sunday, November 26, 1843.*

"Your dear husband has sent me a copy of his correspondence with Gladstone about the Jerusalem book. It has much moved me, and I can quite understand a statesman throwing all his weight on to the side of the sacred old institutions which govern and restrain men and nations, and in this sense I too have, as you know, a sympathy with Puseyism and the Roman Catholic Church. But he who fondly imagines these institutions can be of any efficacy except as outward forms of a free inner life, who fancies they can in themselves engender that life, is scarcely a great statesman, nor a free man. What a delusion to look upon the Episcopate as the foundation of all genuine apostolic institutions, and therefore as the sole salvation of the Church and nation. I am well aware that the spirit, even when it is a living force, does not invariably provide itself with the right body nor with the proper forms. But all the same, the truth remains, that: 'It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.'"

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<sup>1</sup> Island near Syene.

*To Frau von Bunsen.*

"KOROSKO, December 24, 1843.

"My first experiences of the transitoriness of all earthly things are connected with Christmas. As a little boy amid the pleasures of the gifts I had just received, I never could refrain from bitter tears at the end of the evening. Many good things had come to stay, but that one supreme moment of surprise was over; nay, more—all the quiet longings, the glad hopes and expectations, the secret desires and anticipations, were all irrevocably over. It was not really the gifts that we longed for. To us children Christmas was actually a revelation from a higher world, an entering in to our visible world of things invisible, a heavenly apparition—for we did not doubt that the Christ-Child Himself brought the gifts, and it was this belief that gave them their true value. We firmly believed that He had come down from heaven and was present in every house, and how often, as a child, I have longed and tried to see but the hem of His golden garment as He flew away! Ah, if we only could keep this childlike faith in the immediate presence of the Divine! How much more truth there is in it than in all our reasonings!"

From Korosko Abeken accompanied the march of the Lepsius expedition through the Nubian desert to Abu-Hammed, Berber,<sup>1</sup> el Damer, Merve,<sup>2</sup> and the Blue Nile. It was not till the middle of August 1844, nine months after they had started, that the expedition returned safely to Korosko. In the middle of September Abeken parted from Lepsius, as he found the expedition travelled too slowly for him, and after Thebes their plans did not fit in with his.

*To Frau von Bunsen.*

"THEBES, EASTERN BANK OF THE RIVER,  
October 27, 1844.

"Every morning directly after dawn I trot off on my little donkey across the wide grass-grown ruins, to Karnak. There, under the splendid ruins, I spend the heat of the day, writing and studying, and return in the evening after sunset to my ship, where I do a little Arabic and perhaps read a paper or two.

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<sup>1</sup> A town in Nubia on the road to Suakim and Khartoum.

<sup>2</sup> City of the priests in Nubia.

“The news of the modern world takes on a strange aspect here amid these ruins of bygone grandeur. They had great ideas, those old Pharaohs ; one must admit it with admiration. To conceive and carry out the plan of such works demands, as a primary condition, a high standard of national artistic culture, and also a great fund of energy accustomed to the forming of mighty plans. Of course it all bears the character of a most frightful despotism that habitually made use of the forces, both intellectual and physical, of millions of people, merely as tools for the furtherance of its designs. Under such a system alone are such mammoth productions possible, and the true symbol of Egypt is to be found in the granite giants which represent their kings one after another. The Greeks, they made images of the gods ! And all Greek statuary and architecture bears the character of a free people. It exhales a living breath which communicates to the beholder an influence at once stimulating and ennobling. How different are the Greek temples, with their magnificent pillared porticoes, free and open to the public, from these massive structures that look like excavated mountains, and whose rigid exterior you must penetrate if you would find the rich vitality they contain. Here, everything is confined to the interior. Externally all entrance is barred to air and light, to human life and thought. A people possessing such a wealth of artistic conceptions, such a highly developed mythology, could not truly have been lacking in great intellectual energy. But it moves in a very limited circle, and, alas, how incomprehensible it all is ! How little we know, after all, of the intellectual life of the Egyptians, that side of life which in the Hellenic world is so vividly disclosed to us in the writings and poetry of the Hellenes themselves.

“I was told in Athens that when I had seen the Egyptian architecture, it would make me indifferent to that of Greece. But it is just the contrary : I admire and love the latter now more than ever, great as is also my admiration for the Egyptian.”

At Karnak Abeken met Lepsius for the last time. After so long a period of close and cordial intimacy, and so many cares and hardships shared in common, Abeken could not but feel the parting very keenly, and this led him, as soon as he was alone, to throw himself with renewed assiduity into the study of Arabic.

*To Bunsen.*

"CAIRO, February 19, 1845.

"I work all day, and hope by Easter to have laid a foundation to build upon. One learns more here in a day than one does in Germany in a week. My main object in learning Arabic is to see whether in time something can be made of the history of the Arabs previous to Islamism, particularly whether the links between it and the Old Testament history are based on traditions indigenous to some portion, at least, of the Arab race, or whether they were taken by Mahomet from the Jews. I very much fear the latter. It is remarkable how the Jewish faith must have spread over the peninsula in Mahomet's time.

"After Easter I contemplate going on from here by way of Sinai, not by the customary route, but a more northerly one at the northern extremity of the Bitter Lakes, in which, at the time of Moses, the Red Sea apparently terminated. If there is any site to be found for the passage of the Israelites, it is probably in the narrow part between these Bitter Lakes and the present northern extremity of the Gulf of Suez."<sup>1</sup>

*To Frau von Bunsen.*

"MONASTERY OF SINAI, June 1, 1845.

"It must be very nice now at your pleasant Oakhill, while here am I surrounded by a howling waste wilderness. Surely there is no place more in keeping with the historic memories it evokes. All that one has pictured or dreamt of this sublime scene of revelation is far surpassed by the reality, at sight of which it is impossible to suppress a shudder of awe.

"Though the sacred names assigned by tradition to every single locality have but little claim to historical credibility, still the position of Sinai is, on the whole, certain, and the sublimest of natural scenery together with the most sublime of memories combine to produce an effect so overwhelming that all disturbing elements, all details of uncertainty, fall away. These individual traditions and legends do not bother me at all. I see in them only the childish beliefs of various races who have found in them symbols and means whereby to realise the nearness of God. Perhaps you will call it a weakness on my

<sup>1</sup> The results of the investigations made on this journey are contained in the work mentioned on page 60. It was never printed, partly because Abeken had come to different conclusions from those of his friend Lepsius. A few items of information are given in two lectures upon Islam and the Egyptian Museum, which were afterwards printed, and will be referred to later.



part, but a spot which by thousands has been connected with the nearness of God and revered as the place of His appearing, is to me a hallowed place for that very reason.

“Where so many have sought for God, surely many have found Him, and many will find Him still. Of course, it is quite a different condition of human consciousness that leads men to seek and find God in one distinct spot, a habit of mind quite foreign to ours, and essentially pre-Christian and not according to the Gospel. But millions of men are yet in this condition, and since God Himself condescended to it in his revelation of old time and deigned to manifest Himself in accordance with it, surely we should not treat it too superciliously, but humbly recognise that in this also God can draw men unto Himself.

“A Sabbath stillness surrounds me to-day, and almost carries me back to England, a stillness I could not enjoy in the desert as I do here in the convent, for out there I always had the noisy Arabs about me instead of these quiet, solemn monks.

“From the midst of a number of small, irregularly built courtyards, which surround the chapels and cells of the monks, there rise a multitude of cypresses that vividly recall our dear Rome and Frascati. On one side my room looks down on these courtyards across a row of cheerful cells, while on the other it has a view of a garden filled with abundant olive-trees and fruit-trees, a real feast to the eyes in the midst of the barren wilderness. On every side there meet the gaze huge rocky reddish-grey cliffs of granite and gneiss. Only on the north does the valley, in which the convent lies, open to a little plain, where unquestionably the most convenient place for the camp of the Israelites is to be found.

“The holy spot serving as the central point around which the sanctuary has grown up, is the site of the Burning Bush, which is in a small chapel behind the high altar in the large church. To the west of the monastery rises the Gebel Musa, a prolonged granite ridge whose northern portion, consisting of a high rocky tableland with a little green valley, rises over the above-mentioned plain, and is known as Horeb, whilst the southern portion runs up into rather a rugged peak which is regarded as Sinai proper. The division of the two is, however, arbitrary, and Robinson <sup>1</sup> (whose uncommonly thorough account

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Robinson, 1794-1863, gave an account of his first journey to Palestine (1838) in his book *Biblical Researches in Palestine and the Adjacent Countries*. 3 vols., London and Boston, 1841.

spares all his successors the trouble of repetition) is certainly right in saying that if the site of the camp be transferred to this plain, we must take the rock of Horeb as the scene of the giving of the Law.

"He is right, too, when he says that no more suitable place could be imagined for the scene of the Bible story. The effect was almost overpowering when on Thursday evening I emerged from the wild, narrow pass of Nakbel Hani and saw lying in front of me this plain of Rahah. It is enclosed on either side by huge mountains, and shut in at the back by the mighty rock of Horeb like an auditorium indeed, made by Nature for the special purpose of enabling an entire people to witness matters of greatest moment.

"I felt as though the cloud must surely descend upon Horeb and the solemn voice of the trumpet be heard, as though this remarkable natural scenery could not be there simply and solely on its own account—that it must once have been subservient to some great design. You cannot imagine anything wilder, more awe-inspiring than this vast wilderness of rocks. Gebel Musa<sup>1</sup> with the loftier Gebel Katherine<sup>2</sup> form the real culminating point of the whole range of mountains. There is no doubt that they represent the highest sum-total of elevation. All around are single peaks arising like the billows of a petrified sea, or like gigantic bubbles once boiling and seething here in a lake of fire, now stretching away and away, now rising up roundly, and intersected and bifurcated in all directions with crags and crests. And yet, for all its petrification, there is almost a living appearance about this region, for one seems to trace its history in those stony records. One is conscious of the mighty working of Nature. Nowhere have I ever beheld such masses of rock all together, and the impression is the greater because the colossal limbs are presented to the eye with no enshrouding veil of snow or ice, no gay clothing of plant life to cover their sheer nakedness."

In the following letters we find Abeken at the goal of his ambition.

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<sup>1</sup> Generally identified as the Mount of Moses.

<sup>2</sup> On the north-east of Mount Catherine, is the fortified monastery of S. Catherine, founded by Justinian in 527.—Tr.

*To Frau von Bunsen.*

“JERUSALEM, *Sunday, June 22, 1845.*

“Jerusalem! You would not have me try to express all that lies in that one word, but you can, I know, enter into my emotions as I sit here in the solemn Sabbath stillness. I never could have believed that Jerusalem was such a quiet and serious city, nor that its character would so immediately impress one as in harmony with the feelings it evokes in all our hearts.

“I rode hither at eventide over the hill of Judas, a barren eminence, but glowing in the last rays of the setting sun with the most marvellous colours—brown, red, violet, green, like the Roman Campagna. You may imagine what I felt when I saw rising before me the broad sloping ridge of Zion and Mount Moriah, and the cupolas, churches, and mosques, the stately walls and minarets of the Holy City, in the warm light of a summer evening under the cloudless sky. There was a solemn hush all around. It was like approaching Rome. One had a feeling as of drawing near to a holy city of the dead, of entering into the past, as though the present with all its pettiness must fall away and leave the spirit free. The future seemed to link itself immediately to the past, and the beautiful hymn, ‘Jerusalem on high,’ kept running in my thoughts, so easy, so inevitable, is the transition from the earthly to the heavenly Jerusalem here where the widowed city is beheld sitting in the dust.

“The city itself also lay hushed in the stillness of evening, and not a soul was to be seen in the narrow streets, whose stone houses look almost like those of a mediæval European town. Through the moonlit dusk I made my way to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, whose portal recalls the time of the Crusades, and to the atrium of the Temple, of which, however, I was only allowed a glimpse through the doors. Then in my quiet chamber I gave myself up to the thought that I was in Jerusalem!

“Sunday morning awakened a fresh set of emotions. First of all, I went into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and—oh dear!—I came out again pretty quickly. The hideously gaudy modern decorations of the buildings accord only too well with the entire lack of even the most superficial reverence displayed by the assembled Christians. While the Greek service was in progress in all its grandeur, men, women, and children were running, walking, sitting about, talking, even shouting and

squabbling. No one but the priests seemed to be taking any part in what was going on. Inside the door of the church, quite close to the stone upon which, according to tradition, the body of our Lord was embalmed, sat the Turkish watch, smoking and drinking coffee, and, chattering with them, in the midst of their own service, were Greek priests. It was just like the abomination of desolation in the holy places. I have not been there since. After this, it was doubly refreshing to go to our own church on Mount Zion, and to find myself in a very ecclesiastical-looking room amid a congregation of over sixty persons. More than ever did I feel the blessing of Christian fellowship, the privilege of worshipping God in spirit and in truth. Truly it is no small thing to find an Evangelical church in Jerusalem and on Mount Zion."

*To Bunsen.*

"JERUSALEM, July 4, 1845.

"Let me tell you at once, that I find the Bishopric scheme works far more efficiently than I had expected. The labourers in the vineyard are cheerful and of good courage, dauntless and undismayed, full of diligent perseverance and confident hope. This is particularly true of the right reverend (not intended as a title) Bishop Alexander himself.<sup>1</sup>

"I am more than ever convinced that, by a wonderful overruling of Providence, we have found in him exactly the right man, I might say the only man, and that had it not been for his personality, not only would things have gone very differently in London, but everything here would have come to naught.

"You cannot imagine what the difficulty is of forming and keeping together a congregation composed of Germans, English, and Jews. If the Bishop did not stand as a bond of union between the three, the thing could never have succeeded, for though the three nations are much mixed up with one another here, yet they are not really at all on cordial terms. But one and all have a hearty and sincere regard for the Bishop. I admire the man more every day, his plain yet dignified simplicity, his perseverance and devotion, his tact and discretion—above all,

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<sup>1</sup> He died quite suddenly in the desert after Abeken's departure from Jerusalem, on his journey to England, where he was to give an account of his experiences at Jerusalem and explain its needs.



the spirit of real Christian charity which animates him, and enables him to meet all difficulties, both great and small, with cheerfulness and courage. These difficulties are not a few ; you can also well understand that little matters of daily recurrence which pass unnoticed in London are often not the least among them."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"JERUSALEM, August 18, 1845.

"You must not be surprised at my prolonged sojourn in Jerusalem. I deemed it right to spend a quiet time here, in order to observe attentively how things were going on with respect to the Bishopric and the Church. For in Berlin they will probably care more to hear about these than about antiquities. And one cannot form any decided opinion of the needs, difficulties, and prospects of the Bishopric in a week or a fortnight. However, I believe I have now formed mine, and am thinking of my return journey, for which I should like to find a companion."

*To his Uncle Christel Abeken.*

"JERUSALEM, October 1, 1845.

"The Evangelical Church has from the first identified herself with the cause of the conversion of the Jews. This is an encouraging sign, and a genuine pledge, so I believe, of her future prosperity. Since coming here I have become for the first time very clearly aware how much Christianity is to blame for her oppression and persecution during the centuries of this remarkable race, God's chosen people, and what a sacred duty she now has to fulfil towards them. And it will not be fulfilled by merely turning them into German citizens, and causing them to be no longer Jews (emancipating them, to use a foolish expression) ; but every means should be employed to make *Christians* of them, at the same time pointing out to them that, in order to become *Christians by faith*, they need not—nay, ought not—to cease to be *Jews by nationality*. I think the Jewish nation has just as good a right in the Christian Church as the German or the English. To me it is as contemptible for a Jew to be ashamed of his race as for a German or a Frenchman to be so. I have been most forcibly struck here by the marvellous and divinely ordained persistency of the Jewish nationality, and it does not repel, but attracts me, for I have seen how it can be transfigured by Christianity.

Hitherto we have always acted as though God had preserved this people in so miraculous a manner in the midst of their dispersion, simply to make them a sign and example of His *judgment*. Why should we not rather hope that He has preserved them thus miraculously for His *mercy's* sake? I shall never forget the deep impression that is produced upon me every Friday afternoon when I go to the Jews' wailing-place—the only spot among the ruins where the Jews are allowed to weep over the stones of their Temple. It is an affecting sight to behold solemn, grim-visaged women and old, white-headed grey-beards sobbing aloud and covering the hard cold stone with their tears and kisses. The women, half-veiled, sit by on the ground in dull grief, whilst the children, clustering at their knees, drink in from their parents all this passionate sorrow and love for the old sanctuary, this fierce hatred against the Christians also, who only too gladly would rebuild it if they might. After this, it is a great consolation to be able to attend a service for converted Jews held in Hebrew in our Evangelical church, where I can repeat with them the Psalms of David in the sacred tongue, and sing some of our most beautiful German hymns in the Hebrew translation. It is a beautiful sign of the oneness of Divine life and Divine truth in all ages, that our Evangelical hymns are but a continuance and development of the old psalmody on which they are based. Since the establishment of the Bishopric over forty Jews have been baptized here.”

Abeken so far prolonged his stay in Jerusalem as to meet Lepsius, and was not a little tempted to accompany the latter when he left Beyrout on November 30. However, despite many inducements to the contrary, he conceived it his duty to see more of the Holy Land, and therefore, though somewhat weary of travel, he lingered behind.

From Beyrout Abeken visited Constantinople, where he was cordially received by Sir Stratford Canning,<sup>1</sup> the British Ambassador. From thence he went to Smyrna and Sardis, and then, via Trieste and Venice, he travelled back for a farewell visit to his beloved Italy.

During this journey Abeken made the acquaintance of Frau Schàfer<sup>2</sup> and her adopted daughter,

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<sup>1</sup> Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe, Ambassador at Constantinople 1842–1868.

<sup>2</sup> By birth des Granges.

Eugenie,<sup>1</sup> a beautiful though rather shy girl of fourteen, "French by birth, but brought up as a German." This acquaintance led to a lasting friendship with both of them, which gave rise to a correspondence of considerable interest. Abeken had the happy knack of winning the affection and implicit confidence of children, probably because he could sympathise with their joys and sorrows, which are to them so real, though often appearing trivial to outsiders. Thus it was the child's confidence which began the friendship. His approaching departure from Italy had cast Abeken into a melancholy mood, and it was perhaps this which led him to view this meeting as Divinely appointed, as "a blessing for life." Under the influence of the same mood he writes thus to his Uncle Rudolf: "Now Rome is before me, Rome with all its dear and painful memories, with all it yet holds in store. I dread it, and yet I cannot tear myself away. 'Das ist des Menschen Leben!'"

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<sup>1</sup> Became the wife of Mr. Richard of Milan.

## CHAPTER VIII

### RETURN TO ROME—DEPARTURE FROM ITALY

1846-1848

"The perfect circle of this pleasant life  
Hath lost its form, type of eternity ;  
And lies upon earth, a broken ring—  
Token and type of earthly thing.  
Our sun of pleasure hastens towards the west,  
But the green freshness of fair memories  
Lies over these bright days for evermore,  
The checkered lights, the storms of circumstance,  
Shall sweep between us and their happy hours,  
But not efface them—O thou wealthy past !  
Thine are the treasures—thine—and ours alone  
Thro' thee—the present doth in fear rejoice,  
The future but in fantasy—but thou  
Holdest secure for ever and for ever  
The bliss that has been ours—nor present woe,  
Nor future dread can touch that heritage  
Of joys gone by, the only joy we own."

F. BUTLER (Fanny Kemble).

DURING the summer of 1846 Abeken often went to Frascati, where he stayed with his intimate friends, the Knights, at the Villa Taverna. Mrs. Sartoris<sup>1</sup> was also living there with her sister, Mrs. Butler,<sup>2</sup> the latter a character of rare nobility, who had passed through the sad experience of an unhappy marriage. Abeken possessed to an unusual degree the power of imparting counsel and solace to those in trouble, and many hours were spent by him in the society of these two cultured sisters discussing a wide range of subjects, "from grave to gay, from lively to severe." As a parting gift Mrs. Butler sent him the above poem in remembrance of their pleasant time of intercourse.

Abeken's thoughts were at first much occupied with

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<sup>1</sup> A well-known singer.

<sup>2</sup> The famous actress and reciter of Shakespeare.



the Conclave and the enthusiasm shown for Pius IX.,<sup>1</sup> an enthusiasm, like many another in those days, destined to be of short duration. The Prussian Minister in Rome, Count von Usedom, begged him to prolong his stay during the absence of Baron von Canitz,<sup>2</sup> then on leave, and to undertake the heavy increase of work occasioned by the important events of the last Pope's<sup>3</sup> death and the death of Prince Heinrich<sup>4</sup> of Prussia. Abeken had been so long travelling in the East in the character of an attaché to the Prussian Legation that Usedom thought he might equally well fulfil the duties of one now in Rome.

*To Bunsen.*

"PALAZZO CAFFARELLI, *August 21, 1846.*

"I will not deny that I find it very interesting to tarry on for a while in Rome just now. The new Pope really seems to desire the inauguration of a new era, and there is a near prospect of measures being passed the development of which I am extremely anxious to watch. A Pope who starts on this tack is so abnormal that it is impossible to foretell what will be the result of it all.

"To be quite frank, my affection for Rome and for a few dear friends here has much to do with my desire to stay on. . . . It is the last farewell to what is well-nigh the dearest thing on earth to me.

"The business connected with Prince Heinrich's death has nothing very interesting about it beyond the search for a will among his papers, in the course of which we came upon some excellent letters from the late King as well as from the present one. . . ."

*To Bunsen.*

"PALAZZO CAFFARELLI, *December 5, 1846.*

"I almost fancy you are a bit vexed with me for hanging on here (but it can't be much). When autumn had set in I had to decide to spend the winter here also, and as there is a delay

<sup>1</sup> Became Pope, June 16, 1846.

<sup>2</sup> Karl, Freiherr von Canitz und Dollwitz, Councillor of Legation and later Minister at Rome.

<sup>3</sup> Gregory XVI., Pope 1841-1846.

<sup>4</sup> Brother of King Friedrich Wilhelm III.

apparently about Canitz's return, and in the appointment of a successor. I can be of use for a while, and need not consider the time wasted, and I am learning a good deal.

"What is thought in London about Schleswig-Holstein? We are greatly interested in the subject here. We have heard many details from Moltke, the Prince's adjutant, about the country, for he is a Holsteiner. He is particularly interesting to me on account of his Turkish campaigns.<sup>1</sup> He has been making a splendid topographical map of the environs of Rome. . . ."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"ROME, January 8, 1847.

"What different periods of my life have I spent in Rome! And how many distinguished people I have come across! Only yesterday, at a ball at the Torlonia's (I have been, *incredibili dictu*, to two large balls this week), I met a man who has recently become famous, namely, the Corn-law and Free-trade advocate, Mr. Cobden. He has an exceedingly pleasing exterior, a clear, calm expression, and quiet, unassuming manners. . . ."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"PALAZZO CAFFARELLI, April 30, 1847.

"My Roman life will soon be nothing but a memory. Still, it is good to have such memories, and if my life is to be restricted to narrower spheres, it will be good to be able to look back to the treasures of past experience, which in themselves are the pledge and the seed of the future. There is nothing we so surely take into eternity out of this life, as the devotion of real friendship; all other earthly riches, all the intellectual wealth man has garnered up within himself, may pass away, but that which has been bound up with his very heart-strings is in itself of an eternal nature. . . . Surely memory lasts on into that other life, and if our dear ones still are ours in the love we bear them, are we not also theirs by virtue of their love for us—a love glorified by death?"

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<sup>1</sup> Moltke went through the Turkish campaign of 1839 in Syria. Born at Parchim, Mecklenburg, 1800, died 1891.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“PALAZZO CAFFARELLI, *May 1, 1847.*”

“You will understand that I cannot very well do otherwise than go straight to Berlin. But I shall not stay there long this time : at any rate, I shall be with you by vacation in July, of which I am heartily glad. I must own that it is the only thing that I am glad of in returning to Germany, the one thing that softens the pang of leaving Rome. It is extraordinary how fond I have grown of Rome, and I often reproach myself for it. . . . But believe me, my love for my old home at Osnabrück, and for your dear roof and familiar circle, has not diminished.”

Abeken's friendship with the Knight family has been frequently alluded to. He was particularly intimate with one of the daughters, Miss Isabella Knight, who had been a great invalid from her youth, and bore her lifelong suffering with great fortitude and resignation. He often mentions his warm regard for her and distress at her sufferings, and it was a joy to him to be able to minister spiritual comfort and relief to this sorely stricken soul.

The following fragment of conversation between two of Abeken's friends of this period finds a fitting place here at the conclusion of his visit to Italy.

Mrs. Butler : “I do not like borrowing people that do not belong to me.”

Miss Isabella Knight : “He does belong to you ; he belongs to every one that wants him.”

They were true words, and aptly describe Abeken's most essential characteristic. He did belong to every one whom he could cheer or help, and in this consisted his sole happiness for many years of his life.

There seemed to be a peculiar fate against Abeken's departure from Rome ; it was deferred week after week. At length, however, he left his friend Kestner, accompanying him as far as Ponte Molle. From thence he turned once more to gaze at the parting rays of the sun falling on the dome of St. Peter's, on the rapid, silent waters of the Tiber, and the familiar Frascati hills, then bent his course northwards into the night. Urgent despatches caused him to accelerate his movements, and when once

Rome was left behind, he was only too anxious to hasten homewards.

As to the prospects of his future career in Berlin he was not yet clear, nor, indeed, did he trouble himself greatly about them, well content if he could but contribute his share to the large sphere of general usefulness. Time had not passed by without leaving its traces upon him, and his views had broadened in every respect. Most regretfully he had come to the conviction that he was eminently unsuited to an actively clerical life: "Specific theology in its present state," he writes, "can never help the Church, which needs other things than theological knowledge. Of course, in the highest sense, all knowledge is theological, and in that sense alone I should wish to be accounted a theologian."

However, an assured position was by no means easy to find, and the following lines give an unfavourable report of his pecuniary resources at this time:—

*To Bunsen.*

"BERLIN, August 2, 1847.

"By confining myself to the barest necessities, *i.e.* by living as a student, I need not starve, even if I do not receive anything from the State. I must thank God for this—and, indeed, I do thank Him daily. In the course of the last few years I have spent a considerable portion of my fortune, for since October 1845 I have had to live entirely on my own means. I was working at the Legation in Rome for eight and a half months, and though I received a subsidy of three hundred and seventy-five thalers for five months of that time, you cannot live on that for a year and a half. I still have a private income of some six hundred thalers a year, and am prepared to limit myself to that, for I do not see how I am to find any Government appointment at present. Naturally I cannot accept a salary for a mere sinecure, but I would willingly take remuneration in return for some post entailing really active employment, since I need additional resources towards the expense of my literary work. However, I see no such post to be had, so that I could not ask for one, even were asking not a natural impossibility to me.

"I am much longing to work, which I could not do in Rome, not having the necessary resources, and my interests being wholly absorbed by business and public affairs. It has been



a growing desire with me now for years, and I should have cultivated it sooner had I been more conscious of it. Every commoner has this wish ; it is not peculiar to the official class.

“ I am sure you will not blame me for being perfectly ready to descend to the level of a nobody, and to start again to try and win a position for myself. Everything depends on my doing something, not whether I have a title, nor whether I have more or less to eat, since I have no family.”

Abeken's invariable custom, wherever he might be and however small his surroundings, was to make a comfortable home for himself as soon as possible. With this end in view, he left the hotel where he had been staying and took furnished apartments. The house, Number 3, Hinter der Katholischen Kirche, and the fine trees which grew in front of it, have now long since disappeared. This *chambre garnie* possessed a marvellous suite of green furniture with gilded legs and ornamentations of a nondescript style. As time went on Abeken and his friends became so fond of this furniture that he purchased it and it remained in his sitting-room till the end of his life. Indeed, one could as little imagine him without the green set as without all the old memories of his past life which surrounded him to the last.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“ BERLIN, August 22, 1847.

“ . . . As I knew the King must have returned from Dobberan on Tuesday evening, I went to Potsdam on Wednesday and sent my name to the Master of the Household. He sent me to the aide-de-camp, and as the latter fortunately was able to find a spare moment the next day to send my name in, I at once received a command to dine, and was afterwards invited to stay the evening, which we spent in making a delightful trip by steamer round the Pfaueninsel, a most refreshing thing after the heat of the day. Then we had supper, and I did not come away till ten o'clock. The same thing happened yesterday, when I again received a command to attend, only instead of going in the steamer we had tea in the garden.

“ The King was on both occasions goodness and kindness itself. It is impossible to be in his society without being captivated by his amiability and his genial manner—genial in the

best sense. He made me tell him a great deal about my travels and about Pius IX."

*To Bunsen.*

"BERLIN, August 25, 1847.

"Last week I was twice at Sanssouci from midday till late in the evening, and spent a delightful time there, thanks to the kind and charming reception given me by the King. It is almost dangerous to be too much in his company. Each time one sees him he fascinates one afresh, so that one feels ready to devote one's life to him. He has returned evidently very much better for his journey to Dobberan, and also may have got rid of several things which were weighing on his mind. On this occasion I saw the Prince<sup>1</sup> and Princess of Prussia for the first time. The King only alluded in general terms to Jerusalem, though the last time I saw him, Wildenbruch<sup>2</sup> was also there. I have besides heard from Thile that he has only read your confidential and not your official report.

"Alas, I hardly know how to answer your question as to how I am situated with regard to finding a post here. I see no place for me at the Board of Public Instruction, quite apart from my having no claim to one. They require either specialists with practical experience, or men with legal training, and I have neither one nor the other, being as little experienced in schools and educational matters as in medicine or jurisprudence. Neither can I work in the Church Department any more than I can as a member of the theological faculty—of that I am *quite* clear. There is no place for me at the Foreign Office, nor have I any claim to one. So that there is nothing for it but to give up trying for a post altogether, and to live on my own income and go on working in private. I shall continue to make a special study of Egyptology and everything connected with it, and you won't blame me if I keep present-day affairs as an interest for my leisure moments. But I cannot promise you to work solely with a view to the future and for a professorship. That would require preliminary study of philology for years,

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<sup>1</sup> Afterwards the Kaiser Wilhelm I.

<sup>2</sup> Major von Wildenbruch, son of Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia, who married Fräulein von Langen. He was Consul at Beyrout, where Abeken made his acquaintance and that of his family towards the end of 1845. After the Schleswig-Holstein campaign of 1848 Wildenbruch came to Berlin and was afterwards Prussian Minister at Constantinople.

which would necessitate my giving up all studies of a really special nature. Nor does the position of professor present any attractions for me. As for its enabling me to get in vital touch with the younger generation, that is out of the question. Also I cannot deny that I have actually no *enthusiasm* for knowledge, so that I could hardly inspire others with it.

“The only thing I could have enthusiasm for would be a political life in the highest sense of the term. But I am very well aware that in this sense it is quite beyond my sphere. I certainly intend to work, but one need not be a professor for that, nor have a professorship in prospect. The appointment is merely needed as a means of subsistence.”

*To Bunsen.*

“BERLIN, *October 20, 1847.*

“I hear there is a report current in many circles here that I may be sent as consul somewhere to the East. I need not tell you that I know nothing of these rumours, which cannot have arisen in any well-informed places. I neither consider myself fitted for such a post, nor do I wish it in the very slightest degree, not even as a *pis-aller*. *My wish is* to remain in Germany and to regain my mental equilibrium, which I can only do here. Even the account of my travels can only be written here. But it is all empty talk, I know, and so I don't bother myself about it at all. It has come about because my friends do not know what to make of me, and cannot comprehend a person existing without some post.”

*To Bunsen.*

“BERLIN, *November 17, 1847.*

“You ask me if I am anxious to try for the post of Consul-General in Egypt. Honestly, I tell you—no. I do not want to go so far away, and to cut myself off so decidedly from the intellectual life of my own country. I do not think the occupations I might possibly find there could compensate me for all I should lose. Moreover, I do not consider it would be good for my morale to lead an isolated and desultory existence. The conditions of life there are alike unhealthy and unnatural; there are no people whose society would be either stimulating or improving except passing travellers; and no really scientific work would be possible—one would have to go for quite a special

branch of Oriental study. Altogether it would mean frittering away my life for perhaps a year or two. And after that year or two what would become of me? I am not so young as I was. No doubt it is easier to live there without a family, but it is also melancholy. Wildenbruch could not have stood it without his excellent wife. So I should decline the post if it were offered me. But it won't be."

In the middle of December Abeken paid a visit to Frau von Stein<sup>1</sup> at Kochberg. His immediate object in going was to take thither the little daughter of her friend, Frau von Wildenbruch, the child needing a change of air after a severe attack of croup. He also had a long-standing invitation from Frau von Stein herself, to spend a few days with her as she wished him to read the correspondence between Goethe and Charlotte von Stein, which was preserved at Kochberg. Thus, as Abeken says, he "could not very well get out of the arrangement the two ladies had settled." He took this opportunity to visit Rudolstadt—"long-desired Rudolstadt," as he calls it, which recalled memories of his aunt,<sup>2</sup> and he spent an interesting afternoon there, visiting Frau von Gleichen<sup>3</sup> (Emilie Schiller), with whom he had a talk "over old times and the memory of those we loved and honoured."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"RUDOLSTADT, December 17, 1847.

"I found Frau von Gleichen much less altered than I had been led to expect. I should have recognised her at once. She is most agreeable, with a gracious and amiable manner, and she welcomed me as an old acquaintance with a warmth of cordiality that was quite delightful. For you she has a real and sincere affection, and says that she values her correspondence with you so highly that she trusts it will continue unbroken. She was greatly pleased with her father's letters to Körner, and though

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<sup>1</sup> Herr von Stein was a grandson of Charlotte von Stein, Goethe's friend.

<sup>2</sup> Christiane Abeken (Christiane von Wurmb), known in the family as Christel, was brought up by the Princess Regent, and was lady-in-waiting at the Court till her marriage with Rudolf Abeken.

<sup>3</sup> Schiller's daughter Emilie, married Freiherr von Gleichen-Russwurm in 1828.



sorry they should have been published by strangers, she thinks at the same time it may perhaps be a good thing, as many things have thus been made public which she and her family might have omitted.

"Herr von Stein is an excellent and cultivated man. Until last spring he was Councillor in the office for Public Worship and Education at Berlin, and he told me a good deal about the state of affairs there. His wife, a von Altenstein, niece of the late Minister, is a most charming woman, with a fine character and a sound judgment. His mother is full of reminiscences of old Weimar days.

"And now about the Goethe relics. To begin with, there is a writing-table on which he carved his name in 1775, and at which he wrote heaven only knows how many things. Before going to Italy he entrusted to his friend, Charlotte von Stein all the papers which he did not burn, and from them is taken everything that has been published in Schöll's book.<sup>1</sup>

"As to the correspondence itself, what shall I say? It is beyond all words. Lasting from 1776 to 1826, it begins with the following appeal, written in the days of emotional ardour and passionate struggle: 'Dear lady, suffer me to love thee. Were there any I could love more fondly, surely I would tell thee, nor plague thee longer.' And the last letter is dated August 29, 1826, a few days before her death, when, writing in the full-moon of his seventieth year, he says: 'The enclosed poem, my dearest, ought properly to end thus: To see mutual love and inclination endure for so long a season between near and dear neighbours, this is the highest blessing granted to man. And so on, and so on.' The years 1787 and 1788 are missing, for though all the Italian 'Reisebriefe' were addressed to her, Goethe asked for them back in order to publish them. Now Councillor Müller<sup>2</sup> and the family have been maintaining that they were no longer to be found. Meanwhile, a complete stranger, no one knows who, has sent word through a third person that he possesses copies of them and is preparing them for publication. This is a good thing, inasmuch as it has induced

<sup>1</sup> *Goethe's Letters to Frau von Stein from 1776-1826*, edited by A. Schöll, 3 vols. Weimar, 1848-1851.

<sup>2</sup> Friedrich von Müller, 1779-1849, Chancellor at Weimar. Cf. *Goethe's Conversations with Chancellor Müller*, published by Burkhardt, Stuttgart, 1870. The letters in question were published later by Erich Schmidt as two volumes of the "Goethe Society Papers" under the title, *Journals and Letters of Goethe from Italy to Frau von Stein and to Herder*. Weimar, 1886.

the Stein family to undertake the publication themselves, and it is now actually in course of preparation, and will, of course, be issued unexpurgated and unabridged."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, *January 9, 1848.*

"I am both delighted and grateful that Emilie Schiller should have written about me in such friendly terms. Her portrait is associated in my heart with the portraits of those ladies elect, who form a little Pantheon there which I humbly regard as one of my most cherished possessions. There are certain natures, more especially among women, who, the first time one meets them, or upon the shortest acquaintance, have, by the mere fact of existing, the power, not perhaps of disclosing all their precious virtues, for that would be impossible, but of conveying a perfect impression of their inner personality as by a sort of revelation. And with such natures, I flatter myself I have a delicate and unerring tact, for which I am thankful. What you say about the relations with Vulpia<sup>1</sup> is quite true. Indeed, so deeply did Frau von Stein feel this degradation of Goethe, that she broke off all personal intercourse and correspondence with him, and from the end of 1789 until 1796 no letters were exchanged, in spite of two touching letters from Goethe in which he shows himself stern and tender by turns, now challenging and again imploring. It was Goethe's illness that at last brought them together again. Doubtless there were besides many things in 1789 which contributed to this estrangement. Goethe had given offence, after his return from Italy, by not being able to readjust himself to the narrow conditions of life in Weimar. He was no longer so much at home there as he had been, and his thoughts were always in Italy. After his return he would inwardly lament over not being there still, and ask himself: 'Why did I return?' He himself says that he returned on Frau von Stein's account and on that of her son, whose education he had undertaken. I can but too well imagine that he was at this time as vastly insupportable as formerly he had been vastly charming. One sees from his notes and letters how he complains of everything—of the cold, of the weather, nay, of existence itself in our northern clime. This life being part of the natural order of things to

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<sup>1</sup> He alludes to Christiane Vulpius. Her marriage to Goethe took place in 1806.

many good people who knew no other, it was equally natural that even the best and noblest of them should be unable either to sympathize with or forgive Goethe. There is nothing which so estranges people from one another, as when one bewails himself over the loss of a benefit in which the other has had no share. The complaint always *seems* selfish, and very often is so. As Goethe had returned, he should have resigned himself, and without letting others feel his resignation or the great sacrifice he was making for them. But the great man was a human being after all. Then there came about his relations with Christiane Vulpius, who would supply him with that part of married life which his friend, Frau von Stein, could not give, and who would look after the house, his sitting-room, and the kitchen. 'Whom then,' he asks, 'do I deprive of the time and the feelings which I bestow on this poor creature?' But it was just this which pained Frau von Stein so deeply. Had Goethe fallen in love with a wife who was worthy of him, one who would have been an intelligent companion, the old friend could have borne to see her place filled, and herself ousted. Nay, she would have been rejoiced at it, as Goethe himself had once written to her, 'You alone are one who would rejoice could I love another more.' But that he lowered himself to one whom he could not love more than he loved her—this she could not endure.

"Her whole attitude is one of the finest testimonies to this distinguished lady's nobility of character and the innocence of her relations with Goethe. Of him, too, I would fain judge indulgently in this case. He could not love any one more, nor even as much as he loved Charlotte von Stein, so that he could marry no one else. And yet, he was a human being and needed a housekeeper. He therefore made his housekeeper his wife. Most Germans make their wives their housekeepers, which is *almost* as unjust and degrading for the wives.

"How happy was Schiller in comparison to Goethe! Another instance of the just compensations meted out by fate to mankind. On him, to whom she denied so much that she had given to Goethe, she bestowed the highest boon she had withheld from the latter—a wife worthy of him and domestic happiness! Do you recollect what Goethe said to us about Schiller? That he never heard an insignificant word from his lips."

## BOOK II

### CHAPTER I

1848

“Est victor nemo, nisi victum Victus se agnoscat.”—ENNIUS.

“Darin liegt das ganze Schicksal des 19 März.”—ABEKEN to WILDENBRUCH.

THE spring of 1848 opened with the most glorious weather, and a prodigality of bright sunshine and warm breezes almost unknown to dwellers in the north. In the political firmament, however, dark clouds were ominously gathering, and Abeken found it increasingly difficult to concentrate his thoughts upon his work on the Exodus. At the end of February he writes thus to Frau von Bunsen:—

“Good heavens, what events! A telegram came from Paris yesterday midday bringing the last evil tidings. What the aspect of affairs may be now one dares not think. May God grant wisdom and courage to our King. I know on good authority that he signed an order for the mobilization of the Seventh and Eighth Army Corps at seven this evening, and the orders must have been sent off by this time.

“What an historical Nemesis that the Napoleon de la Paix should not have been permitted to depart quietly, but should be fated to behold a Republic proclaimed! Though his motives were—at least half of them—those of self-interest, yet he imagined himself the saviour of the monarchy, and France and Europe after all owed him a great deal. Fancy the Duchesse d’Angoulême<sup>1</sup> living to see this fresh disaster in her old age! The King must be terribly upset by all that has occurred.”

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<sup>1</sup> Only daughter of Louis XVI.



*To Bunsen.*

“BERLIN, *March 17, 1848.*

“Everything is quiet again to-night, and we are beginning to breathe once more after the harrowing time<sup>1</sup> we have had since Monday. Although the disturbances here were unimportant and absolutely non-political, they created a disagreeable and oppressive atmosphere in the town. One felt outraged and ashamed—ashamed for the people, for the citizens, and for the authorities. The foreign newspapers will continue, apparently, to represent the matter in a false light, exaggerating it into an attempt at revolution, whilst our own newspapers, headed by the *Staatszeitung*, try to pass things over or to blot them out entirely. Why won't people understand that in this case, as in all other such affairs, the only profitable course is to tell the simple and actual truth?

“Almost every day last week meetings were held both indoors and out, at the ‘Zelten,’ as they are called in the Thiergarten. Some Jewish litterateurs, Dr. Oppenheim, Dr. Löwenberger, and others, were the chief speakers, and talked a lot of rubbish about freedom of the Press, socialism, provision for the working classes, &c., to a public composed of journalists, young artisans, and mechanics. They talked of sending a deputation to the King, with a petition, it is said, for a Labour Commission, and were provoked on learning that he would not receive any deputations of the sort. On Sunday and Monday especially, there were, of course, large numbers of journeymen and lower-class working men, but they gave no sign of intending either to work or to plunder beyond some chance suggestion.

“Things were just allowed to go on quietly, and the meetings were not even forbidden until Monday, when sudden panic took possession of the chief authorities. Imagining an insurrection as likely, and fearing danger to the royal castle and the Princes' residences, the meeting in the Thiergarten was broken up, half good-naturedly and half by force. A few stones were thrown at the military, but there was no occasion to use their arms. This interposition brought about the very thing they wished to avoid. The crowds, driven from the Thiergarten, proceeded to the Schloss, where some wild songs were sung, the sentries on duty insulted, and a stone or two thrown at the soldiers and officers. Upon this the cavalry were ordered to charge and clear the

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<sup>1</sup> He refers to the mutinous and incendiary meetings in the Thiergarten, the outbreak of disorder in the streets, in spite of the police arrangements, and the news of the fighting in Vienna.

Platz, and, as always happens, only some disinterested spectators and children were wounded. It was a great mistake to drive the meeting from the Thiergarten into the town. I met them in a very excited state, and I then remained outside with the smaller part of the crowd, who were very peaceable. In fact, all would have passed off quietly but for this interference.

“The second mistake was that of the troops charging the crowd merely to clear the Platz, and before any actual excesses were committed. This exasperated the people so that by Tuesday they sought an opportunity to vent their spleen on the soldiers. They thronged the Schlossplatz in the evening and filled the streets leading to the Petriplatz, dense masses insulting the military and throwing stones at them. Here and there they obstructed the passage of the horses by tearing up the boarding over the gutters, which, with an equal love of exaggeration, both people and authorities called barricades. The cavalry were again ordered to charge, injuring some peaceable people who chanced to be passing through the crowd on leaving their friends' houses. At this the people became fearfully incensed against the soldiers, and on Wednesday the Schlossplatz and neighbouring streets were crowded all day with an excited throng, mostly an alarming number of roughs of the lowest class, but also some respectable people who indignantly protested against the employment of the military. Very incendiary speeches were made among the smaller groups, but also some of a pacific nature, and a proclamation was read out promising an inquiry into what had occurred and a more cautious use of the troops, who ought to be employed only when there is actual danger to property. The irritation against the soldiers was so strong that they were attacked with stones and bludgeons, the guard at the Rathhaus assaulted, and little barricades were erected in the adjoining streets. In fact the most egregious measures were attempted and for no definite object and without any motives but those of animosity and suppressed rage. Some of the townspeople had formed themselves into a committee of defence, and wearing white bands on their arms, were insulted and told it was too late, and that they should have come before, and that the people meant to have their revenge on the soldiers, &c. So the troops were actually obliged to fire. Their sangfroid was greatly praised. There was, of course, a good deal of bloodshed, but the firing dispersed the mob and things quieted down. The excitement yesterday was again very great, but the scene shifted from the Schlossplatz to the Linden, near the University. Dense throngs stood there all day, and there

were some really ferocious-looking faces among them. . . . The townspeople by this time were beginning to organize their 'Defence Committee' better, however.

"Seditious characters, some of them supposed to be Poles, went about among the lowest classes, and money was distributed, by whom it is not known, to incite the populace to excess, so there was another struggle last night. The Prince of Prussia's palace and the guardhouse were thought to be in danger, and as the mob did not disperse quickly enough, they were again fired on, and three more innocent people fell. Everything is quiet to-night.

"Political motives were not mentioned, and hardly alluded to, in the Thiergarten meetings, though there was an unreasoning clamour for work. I went about a good deal among the crowds by day and night listening to what was said, but there was not a word on politics, nor the mention of any unpopular Minister, nor of any of our Princes. No windows were broken nor shops damaged—hardly a street lamp injured by accident; neither was there any attempt at looting nor of incendiarism, as might be supposed.

"I do not lack faith in the King, though often times I lack *hope*. May God show him the right course, and may he come to an understanding with the National Assembly before the Assemblée Nationale in France breaks into flame, for the spread of that fire could only be prevented by public affairs being placed upon an absolutely sound basis."

The foregoing letter vividly depicts the condition of affairs and the state of public feeling in Berlin just before the 18th March. The discontent of the working-classes (who had been brought to the verge of starvation), the prevailing unrest throughout Europe, the insecurity of all authority, the inexperience, ineptitude, and incapacity of all classes in the State to deal with political life, are all clearly set forth. The letters which follow are of equal importance as showing how, after all concessions had been made, it was possible for such an outbreak as that of March 18th to occur. The dregs of the populace for weeks had been stirred into smouldering wrath against the Government and the army; foreign influence set the flame alight. Abeken was deeply shocked and distressed and writes:—

"By degrees people are beginning to reflect; oh, if there were no occasion for reflection! If I could only feel enthusiasm

about anything. I am disgusted with that around me, and yet how I should have shared this enthusiasm a fortnight ago—even a week ago. . . .

“ I should feel more calm if I had some definite work. At present it is impossible to write travels or work at Egyptian history.”

*To Bunsen.*

“ BERLIN, *March 23, 1848.*

“ Before the proclamation appeared on Saturday, March 18th, a rumour spread through the town, and about two o'clock a motley crowd streamed towards the Schloss. They stood at the back entrance near the King's apartments, and mingled with their cheers and hurrahs was a demand for the withdrawal of the military doing duty there. I was present, and I know not what gloomy foreboding prevented me from setting my hopes on the King taking action. Then out came a detachment of infantry from the other gateway of the Schloss. The crowd near me thought they were leaving, and rushed cheering and waving their hats, but instead of leaving, they halted, formed up, and moved forward. Simultaneously there came round the corner of the Schlossplatz a division of dragoons, moving straight towards the crowding masses, who turned back in terror. I am assured by intelligent eye-witnesses that they saw the soldiers charge, *but I do not believe it.* I did not see them do so. All I saw was the slow advance of the cavalry to clear the Platz, which at the moment might not have been necessary. I fled with the scattering crowd and went into a house in the Tilt-Yard. I had not been there many minutes when I distinctly heard two shots, and I wrung my hands exclaiming—‘ Everything is lost—everything !’

“ The Schlossplatz was entirely empty directly afterwards, the military drawn up on one side and a solitary patrol or two riding across it ; the men who had been sawing wood before their doors had resumed their work. When I came out, the people standing outside said : ‘ No one was hurt ; they fired high.’ I hurried along the Linden to Wildenbruch's at the Radziwill's palace, passing on the way some menacing groups and droschkys at full gallop. I had not been at Wildenbruch's ten minutes before news arrived that officers had been insulted in the streets, and barricades erected at the street corners round about us. The real fighting began about five o'clock, probably sooner than that nearer the Schloss. The worst was over before midnight, but little



skirmishes took place here and there until morning. The troops had that quarter of the town in their power and had orders to remain and clear the barricades. It was with difficulty I got a little rest during the night. The proclamation appeared on Sunday, promising the withdrawal of the troops if the people submitted."

*To Bunsen.*<sup>1</sup>

"BERLIN, *March 23, 1848.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I will try to be calm and keep my thoughts together, which may be easier in a foreign language than in my own. I have twice begun to write to your wife, but given up in despair, because I felt that my pen dropped gall instead of ink, and that I burst into words which no human lips ought to utter, no human hands to write down. We ought to bow down in silence before the ways of God, whose judgments are terrible, but just. To bow down in silence—yes, for the time for action is past!—past! irretrievably past! All, all is lost—honour, faith, truth, hope—even charity; at least I am uncharitable now. Past, Present, Future are one dark night, one heap of ruin; nowhere a party to join, no rallying point! I am sad beyond measure. All the rational men in all parties, the liberal as well as the royalist, are as hopeless as I am, and differ from each other only in the distribution of the *guilt*. Alas! in my eyes both parties are equally guilty. Neither Government nor nation knew or know what was or is to be done. If you had been here, you would feel as I do—you cannot feel it so strong now, not having been an eye-witness. I wonder whether all revolutions of which history speaks were like this? or whether history will do justice to this?

"I wished to have seen Baron A. again before I wrote, but there is no hope at the present moment. Yet I will try to tell you something of the truth. Of course all I said in my German letter is truth also—but I could not write the whole truth. The truth is, that there never was a more disgraceful revolution, nor a more disgraceful fall of the Government. I do not think that the assemblies in the Thiergarten, of which I had written, were dangerous in themselves—nor would the excitement caused by them have signified anything, if what was to be done had been done quickly. But then came the unfortunate putting off of the Diet until the end of April—the still-born conference of Dresden; the break-up of Vienna gave us the *coup de grâce*.

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<sup>1</sup> Written in English.

Yet so late as Friday foreign emissaries have been heard saying : ' Nous ne ferons rien ici ; on ne peut remuer ce peuple ; il faudra que nous partions.' The arrival of the Köln deputation determined the issue of the proclamation of Saturday, which eight days ago would have saved us. It might have still saved us if it had been God's will. It was not. Emissaries had been very active—money had been spent, by Jews particularly ! Everything was prepared for Saturday ; they saw it was the last moment ; for if that proclamation was allowed to be fully known and to work, *their* object was lost, and everything would have come on peaceably. Then came the unfortunate scene in the Schlossplatz ; the movement of the military force may have been necessary at that moment ; it is no use blaming it much, for the next moment it would have become necessary. The firing two single shots, which we all believed a long time to have been accidental, was, I am now persuaded, the wicked act of conspirators who fired behind the soldiers to make the people believe it had been fired upon by the troops. Immediately the whole town was filled with the cry, purposely spread, of Treason ! Treason ! Everything being prepared beforehand, the barricades were constructed in a moment and most skilfully distributed. Yet at midnight all that part of the town which secured communication from the palace to the Brandenburg and Potsdam gate was in the hands of troops ; they did not proceed farther because such were the orders ; and wise and proper they were in every respect. Dispositions were given to keep that part of the town, to stop there, remain on the defensive, and leave the rest of the city to itself ; thus it was possible either to wait for the submission of the insurgents, and to which the King in a proclamation issued during the night, had made a condition—or, if their submission did not come, to leave the town, with the King, and to take a position outside. This was the situation on Sunday morning ; the troops were victors *on every point* where a combat had been engaged ; they were animated by the best spirit. It was a complete victory—do not believe a word of the lies of the papers, which call the people victorious. We were completely masters of the situation, whether the King remained in Berlin or left the town. In the latter case, Berlin would have been sacked by the *canaille*, but the monarchy had been saved. Now Berlin has been saved—perhaps ! for the end is not come ; but the old Prussian monarchy is dead and buried—and the new German Empire is not born.

“ God forgive those who advised the King to give up his position, whoever they be, citizens or others ; God forgive the

poor good King himself, whose kind heart listened to the promise of the *citizens*, that, if the force were drawn back, within two hours they would establish order and security. Two hours after this promise was given, the palace was in the hands of the lowest rabble, who with difficulty were prevented from entering the apartments; and everything was lost—nothing left to the King but to do whatever was asked of him. Between one and two o'clock I was in the castle-yard, when the dead bodies were brought there crowned with laurel and flowers and the King forced to appear on the balcony<sup>1</sup> and look upon them. The name of him who persuaded the King to do so shall not come from my pen—but I shall not forget it. Then the people were victorious; the King a prisoner; the Princes fled (except Prince Albrecht, who, being nothing but a gamin himself, could trust gamins). I left the castle in despair. About four o'clock the citizens were armed and organised; the students joined them, and I must say since that time they have behaved well; but ah! they have to atone for much. In the evening the town was illuminated; the night passed quietly; but on the Monday there was great danger again, and for a moment the Garde Nationale did not think they could keep matters quiet. The Prince of Prussia's palace was saved only by declaring it national property. Still the effervescence subsided. The last remnants of the military force left the town on Monday night. The rest you know from the papers, where you will read between the lines.

“The horrible solemnity<sup>2</sup> of yesterday I have not seen; I fled to the farthest part of the town to avoid seeing it. The King is well, the Queen dreadfully suffering.<sup>3</sup> Alas! Alas! Alas!

*To Bunsen.*

“BERLIN, *March 28, 1848.*

“Who could be calm after seeing all that we have clung to and believed in for so long—the Prussian monarchy and the House of Hohenzollern—fall to pieces in a single day? How can one be calm, how look forward with joy and hope to the future of Germany, after beholding the rise of a new Germany, not consecrated by the blood of a true war of freedom, but in

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<sup>1</sup> After Abeken had left, the King came down into the courtyard.

<sup>2</sup> The King rode through the streets with the Prussian colours on the morning of March 21.

<sup>3</sup> Queen Elizabeth was very ill at the time. On March 18th she had risen from her sick-bed to help and console the King in his difficulties.

the mud-bath of a shameful insurrection basely kindled by alien money, fostered by the apathy, thoughtlessness, and petty strife of the townspeople, and rendered victorious by the weak vacillation of those in high places? For such was this glorious Berlin revolution of ours! A united, strong, and noble Germany is not constituted out of elements such as these. Out of blood and fire the eagle may rise, a rejuvenated phoenix; but if it has wallowed in the mire, mire will cleave to its pinions and drag it down. The old Prussian eagle, the old Prussian monarchy with her consolidated military power, Prussia, the military state, the warrior camp which asserted herself so proudly at the Landtag—*that* Prussia is dead and gone.

“The town is quiet, and the Government is beginning in a measure to come to its senses and to coalesce. Count Arnim<sup>1</sup> will have difficulty in remaining Premier. He has twice wanted to throw up his portfolio.

“The citizens are heartily longing for the return of the military, as they find sentry-work most laborious. The students, on the other hand, still think it great fun, as is natural. A better tone is gradually making itself heard in the papers, and Bülow-Cummerow has written a couple of very good newspaper articles. At all events, they are now venturing to declare that the military really came off conquerors in the fray, and that they were withdrawn by the King after the victory. It is now admitted that foreign emissaries were very busily employed before and after the revolution, and the Civic Guard have captured some of them when trying to stir the people up afresh. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the rising was a premeditated thing, the day and hour being fixed (the 18th, between two and three o'clock in the afternoon). Everything was in readiness for the barricades. In the cellars of the houses, quantities of stones have been discovered which had been conveyed there beforehand, and the cellars connected from house to house and stopped up with mattresses, &c. At the moment when the catastrophe took place on the Schlossplatz, armed men were seen about, and two days previously a lecture had been given at the reading room upon the art of barricade-making. The Belgian Minister here, von Nothomb,<sup>2</sup> has officiously announced that he was privately advised from Belgium to remove his family to some place of

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<sup>1</sup> The new Ministry consisted of Count Arnim-Boitzenburg, Alfred von Auerswald, Count Schwerin-Putzar, Heinrich von Arnim, who was Minister for Foreign Affairs, and others.

<sup>2</sup> He had been Belgian Minister in Berlin since 1845.



safety by the nineteenth. Besides this, other news now comes from all parts of the Continent of outbreaks on the 18th. On that day an attempt was made to set up Republics in Munich, Venice, Milan, and who knows where else. It is evident that the Republican party were in collusion everywhere. Here they hoped, by mortifying and humiliating the King, to induce him to abdicate, and by calumny to make things impossible for the Prince of Prussia. The Berliners being absolutely helpless ciphers as far as politics are concerned, the little Republican party would thus have forced their way to the top. However, in this, at least, they did not succeed. But as it was, the whole outbreak might have been averted had the promises of the morning of the 18th come but a couple of days sooner, and had not such fearful provocation been given to the peaceable citizens by the unfortunate skirmishes on the part of the soldiers during the preceding days. By not employing the military on Monday we should have been spared the bloody catastrophe, though not the concessions. Still, did we not need those concessions, as well as a complete change of system? On Saturday it was too late. The fault lay, not in the employment of armed force on Saturday, but in the not carrying through the same on Sunday. Now, throughout the whole of Germany, our beloved King will be denounced as the murderer and butcher of his people, whereas his fault lay in his too great leniency, which led him to sacrifice the monarchy for the sake of preserving the town. I say our beloved King, as my affection for him has not lessened, though, of course, my trust in him has gone. He will never stand at the head of Germany!

“The scenes at the University were a regular comedy, and passed all belief. They have thoroughly disgusted me with academic life. What harm all this will do to the rising generation!”

Some distraction was afforded to Abeken by the visit of Sir Stratford and Lady Canning, whom he conducted round the town to museums, hospitals, &c. He also took Sir Stratford to see Rauch,<sup>1</sup> to Humboldt at Potsdam, and to other distinguished personages. Meanwhile he did not for a moment lose his deep interest in politics. The arduous work in connection with Schleswig-Holstein, which later on was to claim his constant attention, had begun to

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<sup>1</sup> Christian Daniel Rauch, 1777-1857. He had lived in Berlin since 1811.

occupy him daily, both at the Foreign Office and at home, often till late at night.

*To Bunsen.*

“BERLIN, *April 20, 1848.*

“ You reproached me for not viewing affairs here from a calm and historical standpoint. To do this I should have to transgress the Solonian precept<sup>1</sup> and take part with neither side, which will not do in these days. I could rejoice in the revolt of a free people against the subjection of the State to the police, if only the makings of a free people and the consequent prospect of a constitutional State could anywhere be found. But so far, the arbitrary government of the upper classes has only been replaced by the arbitrary rule of the lower. . . .

“ The fact remains that, on March 18th, we started on the road towards reform, but were forced into a revolutionary course by a rebellion obtruded upon us at the instigation of a party who did not want us to go on the way peaceably, but demanded some action indicative of the sovereignty of the people. That this insurrection was only the result of a dull feeling on the part of the people that things ought to be different is self-evident. You, abroad, can have no notion of the moral anarchy prevailing in all minds at the present moment, and it is a good thing you can't. May you succeed in bringing England to a proper opinion of the Schleswig question ! ”<sup>2</sup>

In the middle of April 1848 Abeken was appointed Assistant Secretary at the Foreign Office, at first without salary. It was a post in which his versatile abilities, discretion, and conscientious industry soon found recognition. From this time forward he continued to be employed on various affairs, and was at intervals entrusted with the conduct of special missions, &c. His important correspondence with eminent persons bears evidence to his interest in everything connected with politics, art, science, and literature, and testifies to the confidence reposed in him by his superiors and his friends. He seldom was absent on leave.

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<sup>1</sup> The law of Solon, which pronounces the man who in a sedition stood aloof and took no part with either side, to be dishonoured and disfranchised.

<sup>2</sup> England at this time favoured Denmark, and disagreed with the policy of Prussia.

It would be impossible to give any clear account of Abeken's widespread activity in the sphere of politics, since he did not occupy a front rank, but worked mostly in the name of others, and important documents and drafts in his handwriting which were not delivered, he generally destroyed at once. Of his work, it may be said, in the words of the old dictum—

“ Thue Gutes und wirf's ins Meer,  
Sieht's der Fisch nicht, so sieht's der Herr ! ”

Prussia's decision to support the Schleswig-Holsteiners now became an accomplished fact. War was begun with the disapproval of England.

*To Bunsen.*

“ BERLIN, April 23, 1848.

“ Yesterday morning I received your paper upon Schleswig, and at once set about translating it. It is quite excellent, and must convince even those Englishmen who have not yet taken any side. I have never seen the turning-point of the whole affair set forth in so clear and concise, so striking, and, I may add, so popular a manner as by you. And I think I am a good judge, as I have recently been occupied to some extent myself with the subject. My object in this was, in the first place, to be able to talk to Sir Stratford about it, and to give him some items of information ; and then I pursued it from interest, in order to acquaint myself with our rights in the matter, which, unfortunately, is taken up by most people merely as a national enthusiasm, and is fostered by songs of the *meerumschlungene* order.

“ I trust that the affair will be decided in a few days' time, and that England will then accept it as a *fait accompli*. In to-day's paper there is news of an order given to Danish ships to hold up German ones. This will frighten our middle-class Philistines into fits, and will strengthen the cry in Frankfort for a German navy, which they will expect to grow up out of the water like a mushroom.”

*To Bunsen.*

“ BERLIN, April 25, 1848.

“ Victoria ! <sup>1</sup> The behaviour of the troops has been superb ; Prussian troops only, and especially the Franz and Alexander

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<sup>1</sup> On April 23, 1848, General von Wrangel defeated the Danes at Schleswig and advanced into Jutland.

regiments of the Guards. These were but the vanguard of the army *en gros*, which they did not wait for. After a march of four miles (German miles), and without any artillery, they assaulted and took the strongest position after a bloody fight of three hours, and this not *by* but *against* superior numbers! We have just received, at eight o'clock this evening, the further intelligence that they have entered Flensburg and have taken all the other positions at the point of the bayonet. Now, one can rejoice in the black, red, and yellow cockade since its yellow has turned to fire, and its red to blood.

"The Minister<sup>1</sup> wishes me to tell you he has received your letter to-day, and congratulates you on your paper concerning Holstein, *which* has already produced the very best impression. . . .

"Here every one is rejoicing, although it is generally known that our terms are heavy. The report in the special edition of the paper is an official one from Wildenbruch. Prince Radziwill<sup>2</sup> was for a long time under musketry fire. We have been waiting so impatiently for the decisive blow. It had become imperatively necessary. Now Glück auf! This will considerably improve our position in Germany. Altogether the symptoms are favourable. All we need now is energy and strength."

### *To Bunsen.*

"BERLIN, May 4, 1848.

"... Usedom will probably have to start for Frankfort to-night. Verbal intercourse, a clear insight into the state of affairs, and his own sound judgment must serve him in lieu of instructions. He has great talent, and won't let himself be put out. He is probably at the present moment at the Schloss with the Ministers. He saw the King yesterday for a short time—a painful meeting.<sup>3</sup> Our elections in Berlin seem to have turned out pretty well, but the greatest confusion is said to prevail at their preliminary meetings.<sup>4</sup> In Breslau the elections are said to have turned very badly, nor were they as good as was expected in the country districts—at least in the neighbourhood of Berlin

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<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Alexander, Freiherr von Arnim, 1789–1861. Minister for Foreign Affairs from March 21 till June 8, 1848. In 1849 he was elected to the First Chamber. An opponent of Manteuffel.

<sup>2</sup> Prince Wilhelm Radziwill, 1797–1890. Prussian general. In 1849 with the Prince of Prussia in Baden. Subsequently commander of the Engineer Corps.

<sup>3</sup> On account of the events in March.

<sup>4</sup> In Prussia electors are first chosen who then elect the members. V. v. B.



and in the Neumark. Next Monday will be a great day. Your memorial on the freedom of the Church has arrived. We shall modify or omit a few things here and there before submitting it to Count Schwerin.<sup>1</sup> It will be a good thing if it will do. Just now one can't tell what will do anywhere.

"Usedom complains of the way in which business is done, or rather not done, but just hurried through. It certainly is so, and yet how much better than the old plan of having three Ministers to each subject! The advice of three Councillors in every Ministry did not expedite work, but spoilt it. . . ."

Sundays brought but little comfort. If the tumultuous passions of the moment did not find an echo in the places of worship, at all events the crude perplexities, the lukewarmness, and indifference of the period were reflected in the services. Highly, too, as Abeken valued freedom of speech, he often had reason to wish it were banished from the Church until such time as God might see fit to send forth more inspired preachers, who, like Isaiah of old, should have their lips touched with living coals from the divine altar. Meanwhile his desire was for a quiet form of worship and open churches wherein to kneel and compose the thoughts for prayer.

At this period Abeken was privately offered various foreign posts, but he remained firm in his determination not to go abroad. "At the present time," he writes, "I can be of use *to* Germany *in* Germany, and this is a primary consideration. Everything else is subsidiary to this. The struggle is *here*, not abroad."

Abeken's work in connection with the Schleswig-Holstein question was destined to lay the foundation of his subsequent career. He was, at the same time, busied with public placards and brochures in favour of the return of the Prince of Prussia from England.

### *To Wildenbruch.*

"BERLIN, *May* 13, 1848.

"We were greatly delighted with your last report of the invasion of Fünen by our grenades. To-day we have news from

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<sup>1</sup> Maximilian, Count von Schwerin-Putzar, 1804-1872. Minister for Public Worship from March 19 to June 14, 1848.

London that Denmark has unreservedly accepted the mediation of England. We have grounds for believing that London has brought pressure to bear on Copenhagen, and will exercise it yet further to induce her rulers to accept sensible terms. We, on our side, will put no difficulties in the way so soon as there is a chance of matters being adjusted in a national and honourable manner."

*To Bunsen.*

"BERLIN, *May 14, 1848.*

"I am convinced that if the Ministry<sup>1</sup> stands firm all will be well. I cannot sufficiently express to you my admiration of our revered chief's<sup>2</sup> behaviour, and of his cheerful courage. He has just told me to send you his remembrances, and to bid you not to worry yourself, for of one thing you may rest assured—that we shall not give in! So adieu."

*To Bunsen.*

"BERLIN, *Evening of May 17, 1848.*

"It is quite as important for us as for you, that the Schleswig affair should be brought to an end as quickly as is compatible with honour and justice. Relations with Russia are becoming increasingly strained and threatening. The news from Paris, too, is of such a nature that we can scarcely hope for a victory of the peace party, so that we may expect at any moment to come into conflict in the west or the east, and may, perhaps, have to decide for one side or the other, unless our internal relations are securely enough organised for us to keep our neutrality."

*To Wildenbruch.*

"BERLIN, *May 22, 1848.*

"I am sitting down after a busy day, to write you a few words upon to-day's opening ceremony, at which I was present, and with mixed feelings.<sup>3</sup> It was in the old Weisse Saal, filled *pro tem.* with chairs, and not with the sumptuous-looking red cloth benches which are a real adornment to the hall at the meeting of the united Landtag.

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<sup>1</sup> It was occupied with the question of the recall of the Prince of Prussia from England.

<sup>2</sup> Freiherr von Arnim.

<sup>3</sup> The opening of the Constitutional National Assembly.

"As to our *res Danica*, I cannot speak of it; I feel far too sore about it. What will the army say to this withdrawal from Jutland? And yet it was necessary, now that Germany has deserted us, and Hanover, Oldenburg, and the Hanse towns have not only removed the embargo upon Danish vessels, but have advertised its removal in Copenhagen. Prussia cannot stand alone against the complications to which the occupation of Jutland might give rise in her foreign policy."

*To Bunsen.*

"BERLIN, May 24, 1848.

"Our present course of action in Schleswig, and more especially in Jutland, will open Lord Palmerston's<sup>1</sup> eyes *thoroughly* as to where the desire for peace lies, and who it is that shows a respect for England and is anxiously seeking English mediation. He will perceive the difference between the compliance of the victors and the arrogance of the vanquished."

*To Wildenbruch.*

"BERLIN, May 24, 1848.

"... Three battalions of the Landwehr marched up to the house of Camphausen, the Minister, in splendid form. They were in plain clothes, but each company was led by a man in uniform. We were sitting quietly at the Foreign Office engaged upon your affairs, when we were roused by the tramp of military feet. Count Bülow rushed first to the window. I followed him, and then we both went outside. It was a pleasure to see and hear the fellows marching. In front of the house they formed up, and a deputation was sent in. Then Camphausen appeared on the balcony and called for a cheer for the Prince of Prussia, which was taken up three times with thunders of applause, as was the 'Hoch' which the leader then proposed for the King and the whole Ministry. After this the Prussian anthem was sung, being perpetually interrupted by 'Hurrahs' and at last the people with one voice lustily sang a song about the Prince, written, so I hear, by Herr von Gaudy,<sup>2</sup> to the tune of 'Prince Eugen.' At its conclusion there was renewed cheering for the King, the Prince, the Ministry, and the Landwehr. It was an imposing demonstration, both by reason of its size and its behaviour, and I think it will have sent the hearts of several

<sup>1</sup> Lord Palmerston's sobriquet at this period was Lord Firebrand.

<sup>2</sup> Prussian officer, major in the Kaiser Franz Grenadier Guards.

of the screamers at the political club into their shoes. The people were all in the best of tempers, and so orderly and quiet. I spoke to several, and was really delighted with them, as I think you will be, and so will their gallant comrades in the army in Jutland—or will this find you already in Schleswig? It looks as though they were in earnest and will have a good effect on our Landtag, the majority of whom are very susceptible to demonstrations of this kind.

“We can now calmly afford to smile over the wretched cater-wauling made by a heap of ragamuffins yesterday, and who are at it again at this moment, only an hour after this serious demonstration. It only helps to make the citizens better disposed.

“Not a week passes in Breslau without the civic guard having to use their rifles, and they are so furious with the mob that they can only be restrained with difficulty.

“The Landtag was unable to hold its first sitting to-day, its authority not having been confirmed by the Commission.<sup>1</sup> It will probably sit to-morrow, when the woeful confusion which has already been evinced, so I hear, at the preliminary meetings, will become thoroughly manifest. I wonder whether they will succeed in forming a compact party out of the disordered mass, among which there are only a few individual units open to political ideas of any sort whatever. The peasants will vote with their clergy, albeit the latter are said to have lost much of their influence in Upper Silesia.”

In these days Abeken was working at fever pitch, the current ministerial business being considerably augmented by the perpetual changes in the directorate, while in addition to extensive semi-official and private correspondence, there were public notices and newspaper articles to be prepared. To speak or write much about himself was contrary to Abeken's nature, and he did so only when urged thereto by his friends and relations.

*To Bunsen.*

“BERLIN, May 28, 1848.

“Our Berlin Assembly still continues to be a lamentable affair, stupid as to character, vulgar as to physiognomy, so say the more thoughtful and liberal-minded.

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<sup>1</sup> The full power had not yet been recognized by the Commission. V. v. B.



"The election of Milde<sup>1</sup> as President is a victory for the two-Chamber system over the supporters of the one-Chamber principle. Meanwhile they keep on with their absurd caterwauling. However, it looks to-day as though they would give it up.

"It is to be hoped that our evacuation of Jutland will not fail to make an impression in England. You will see that it makes due effect there.

"P.S.—You say I ought to endeavour to insure my position ; but I am powerless in the matter. If I can be of use, they will make use of me. Everything else is a matter of indifference."

*To Bunsen.*

"BERLIN, June 7, 1848.

"The Prince<sup>2</sup> has arrived at Charlottenburg to-day, the anniversary of his father's death, and probably the two houses will take counsel with the Minister-President<sup>3</sup> as to whether he is to come to Berlin to-morrow. What your dear wife says of him has given real pleasure both to myself and others ; it entirely confirms the opinion which I had formed of him and which I have endeavoured with all my might to disseminate. I only hope he may have the strength to withstand the camarilla which has every intention of growing up around him. He certainly has the will to do so. Count von der Goltz<sup>4</sup> is at Charlottenburg with the Prince. I am anxious to see him."

Disturbances broke out afresh, the arsenal being pillaged. The mob collected before the War Office, and some Deputies were insulted. Uhlich's<sup>5</sup> motion, against measures being taken for the defence of the National Assembly, was passed, as was also the motion of Waldeck,<sup>6</sup> the consequence being that Herr von Arnim retired from the Foreign Office and Herr von Schleinitz<sup>7</sup> took his place.

<sup>1</sup> A Breslau merchant, member of the Auerswald Ministry.

<sup>2</sup> Prince of Prussia, afterwards Kaiser Wilhelm I.

<sup>3</sup> Ludolf Camphausen, 1803-1890. Minister-President from March 29 till June 20, 1848.

<sup>4</sup> Karl Friedrich, Count von der Goltz, who at the end of March had been appointed aide-de-camp to the Prince of Prussia. Afterwards a general of cavalry.

<sup>5</sup> Pastor of the Free Church at Magdeburg.

<sup>6</sup> Assistant at the Supreme Court of Justice, and then Councillor.

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Gustav Adolf, Count von Schleinitz, 1807-1885. Minister for Foreign Affairs in June 1848, and from July 1849 till September 1850. Late Minister in the Royal Household.

At the end of June news came of fresh fighting in Paris. Camphausen, the Minister-President resigned, and Hansemann<sup>1</sup> was entrusted with the task of forming a new Ministry. The troops advanced into Schleswig, the Danes retreating before them. Meanwhile the National Assembly, more wildly irrational than ever, was sitting daily at Frankfort a.M. It was called upon to discuss with the individual governments the question of replacing the old Diet by a German Imperial Constitution.

*To Bunsen.*

“BERLIN, *July 1, 1848.*

“We look upon all ministerial conditions here as provisional merely, and few people give the present Ministry more than a fortnight. They have the support of no pronounced party in the Chamber, and their only chance is to make a decided stand for peace and order in the capital. It seems as though they meant to take advantage of this, and they have a stout supporter in the Minister Schreckenstein.<sup>2</sup> The gruesome events in Paris are a lesson to both sections, so that we have some prospect of peace in our immediate entourage. . . .

“Now as to affairs in Frankfort. The Assembly<sup>3</sup> are seized with that bacchic intoxication to which great masses are so prone. . . .

“I can write nothing yet about the Schleswig-Holstein affair, as we have not come to any decision. But this much I venture to affirm with certainty, that the proposals of the noble Lord<sup>4</sup> will not be accepted either by the National Assembly at Frankfort, the old Diet, or the new Central Power. Indeed, I should not be at all surprised if the mere mention of them were to make the National Assembly in Frankfort immediately decide upon the incorporation of Schleswig. Do you really suppose that an Assembly of five hundred Germans would be less self-willed, less arbitrary, less mad than a King of Denmark ?

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<sup>1</sup> David Justus Hansemann, 1790–1864, Was Minister of Finance in 1848, and resigned in September of the same year.

<sup>2</sup> General von Schreckenstein distinguished himself in quelling the insurrection on the Rhine, and was appointed Minister of War, June 19. He resigned in September in consequence of Stein's motion.

<sup>3</sup> The National Assembly, Berlin.

<sup>4</sup> Lord Palmerston's proposals with regard to the armistice.

Ask M. de Tallenay<sup>1</sup> what the National Assembly in Paris would do were Aachen or Trier or Rhenish Bavaria to beg for incorporation with France as the Schleswigers have begged us. And the Paris Assembly has much more stability, judgment, and tact than that at Frankfort. Meanwhile, we do not care about peace, but only for an armistice, that we may get free passage for our navigation, and an armistice we can conclude, fortunately, without Frankfort.

"I cannot blame England for having no confidence in Germany. What I cannot forgive her is for being so hostile towards us. Instead of helping us to regulate our affairs she hinders us. This she will have to atone for one of these days when Germany fails her. . . ."

*To Wildenbruch.*

"BERLIN, July 5, 1848.

"What do you say to the Archduke John?<sup>2</sup> Of course, one cannot help feeling rather bitter, but it is a good thing in itself, and will turn out to our advantage. This I am convinced of, and not because I am optimistic, but from the very reverse of optimism; for, indeed, I think the outlook a very black one. As the arrangement won't succeed, it is better that he should wield the sword than the sceptre of the Empire; the latter means ruin, the former helps us. It is better for us not to ruin ourselves."

*To Wildenbruch.*

"BERLIN, July 6, 1848.

"Our Left mean to make the Imperial Administrator into their *cheval de bataille*, as it is called, and as the Ministry has taken up such a becomingly Prussian standpoint, they are going to pose as rabidly German. Had the Ministry, on the contrary, adopted the German side, then the Left would, of course, have turned Prussian. They will be certain to break their necks over it in their own country, but they will as certainly make things very difficult for us at Frankfort, where they will play the good child, and cause the Paulskirche people to say that the Prussian Church and the Prussian people are more German than the Prussian Government. It is precisely this which makes it a sacred duty to say something with regard to those

<sup>1</sup> The Marquis de Tallenay, French Envoy to the Diet at Frankfort-am-Main, and again under Louis Napoleon.

<sup>2</sup> Imperial Administrator.

men. Our Provisional Government still continues, and so does the tranquillity of the town."

Painfully conscious of the humiliating condition of his country, Abeken did his utmost to secure and to retain on her behalf the active services of able and competent men. Many who would have otherwise been willing to lay down their lives for King and Fatherland were so profoundly mortified by the pernicious state of public affairs that they deemed it impossible any longer honourably to serve their country. Abeken was indefatigable in his efforts to adjust difficulties, and smooth over differences of opinion on all sides, fully aware though he was of the thanklessness of the task and the small satisfaction to be derived from it. Solicitous only for the ultimate victory of all that was noblest and best, he flung all petty feelings and personal considerations absolutely aside, and to this he owed the great influence which he imperceptibly gained over so many people. His unwearied exertions to win recognition for what was right and good brought him into friendly relations with all sorts and conditions of men, and in touch with a great variety of opinions; but never did he flinch from his own inner convictions nor swerve from the course he had marked out for himself in matters of religion and politics.

*To Bunsen.*

"BERLIN, *July* 19, 1848.

"Your last copious letter I have left unanswered with an easy conscience, for I really could hardly have told you anything about the Imperial Administrator or the armistice,<sup>1</sup> beyond what I had already written to you officially. Everything was still so undecided and uncertain. The armistice was again rendered problematical owing to the protests raised by the soldiers, and, in consequence of this delay, the sanction of the Imperial Administrator was necessarily deferred. With regard to the latter, all we knew was that we accepted him, but we had

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<sup>1</sup> The Assembly at Frankfort was opposed to the armistice, which, albeit unpopular, was a necessary measure owing to the lack of a fleet. It was now rendered more difficult by the election of the Archduke John.



not made it at all clear how far our attitude would coincide or disagree with his, nor, for that matter, can I say we have done so yet.

"We have not yet declared our intentions. There is much to be said for this, and I am not going to find fault. At the same time, it will alienate the North German States, especially Hanover, as they will suppose us to be playing a double game, and think we are submitting to the Administrator merely for the purpose of fishing in troubled waters, and to have the smaller states incorporated with us first, before declaring ourselves. This is indeed far from being our intention. But I am of opinion that the proper course for us is to hold aloof and be quickly prepared for action when it comes ; that meanwhile we should not provoke a conflict by armed declarations—those we have already made, I am sure you cannot censure—but postpone it as long as it is humanly possible, and go to the utmost limit we can, short of doing anything actually suicidal.

"Usedom arrived here this evening,<sup>1</sup> but I have not yet seen him. He is still closeted with our good Under-Secretary, Count Bülow, whose nomination to this post is welcome to every one as insuring a sound, discreet, and effective policy, and will make certain ministerial changes here, less dangerous. Usedom's presence will, I hope, be of real use, for he is now very well acquainted with the state of public feeling and affairs at Frankfort. The last debate on Jacoby's motion<sup>2</sup> will not have failed to make an effect in Frankfort."

### *To Bunsen.*

"BERLIN, *July 20, 1848.*

"... I have just been interrupted by an order to write to you officially,<sup>3</sup> so that this letter is, properly speaking, unnecessary. However, since it is written, I may as well let it go. You can imagine how glad I am to think I shall see you soon. When we parted in London we never thought we should meet again here under such circumstances. You will find it hard, indeed painful, to come here at the present juncture. Still, it is a good thing you are coming, and will be of great advantage both to yourself and to us. It is a great thing to be on the spot !"

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<sup>1</sup> From Frankfort-am-Main.

<sup>2</sup> On the position of Prussia with regard to Germany.

<sup>3</sup> This refers to Bunsen's recall to Berlin.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“BERLIN, August 30, 1848.

“These last days have been completely taken up by the various ins and outs of the armistice negotiations with Denmark, and the wished-for conclusion<sup>1</sup> having been arrived at, it was followed by the return of our plenipotentiary the day before yesterday. This has, of course, necessitated a great deal of writing in all directions.

“As to the state of affairs here, there is, I am glad to say, but little more to tell you at the present moment. The Ministry is at all events, showing some energy in passiveness, and even that is a help. The scenes during the past week have been beyond everything—really outrageous. I happened to be at the *soirée* of the Minister in question,<sup>2</sup> who is President of the Council and Chief of our Department, so that I was present throughout the affair, which had a serious as well as a comic side to it. Shortly before, I had wished to leave the house to go to our own office close by, but I was surrounded by crowds of people and compelled by force to return, though nothing further was done to me. All they wanted was that I should not leave, as they thought I might go and fetch the military.

“These small excitements trouble me very little at bottom. What really does distress me is the systematic destruction of all social and moral principles, the total absence in the present day of any great political ideas, the lack of any constructive energy. What is to become of the future generation? Of course men like yourself can do much to preserve a steadfastness of moral tone in the young people about them, but unfortunately these cases are only the exception; the spirit of the age is too potent and carries everything along with the stream.”

In 1848 anarchy for the first time raised its head in Prussia, that insidious foe whose influence is still secretly at work within the heart of the Empire. Masquerading under the cloak of unity, it held forth crowns as a prize, but its gifts were only thorns, and the lower classes, dazzled by its flattering promises of prosperity, were fated to reap a harvest of poverty and distress. But peoples, like individuals, can only learn by experience. All right-minded

<sup>1</sup> The conclusion of the first Danish war, by the armistice of Malmö, on unfavourable terms; it lasted from August 26, 1848, till March 26, 1849.

<sup>2</sup> Auerswald.

persons in those days were fain to echo Wildenbruch's exclamation: "God save our beloved Prussia and her noble and unfortunate King! God enlighten her people who are being led astray and driven to destruction for time and eternity by a gang of ruffians!"

Not only in Germany at large were the noblest aspirations and sentiments being rapidly swept away by desecrating hands, but anarchist elements were also involved in the Schleswig campaign. "I fear," writes Wildenbruch, "you were right in your prophecy. The people here are mad. The Republic has been from the beginning really at the bottom of all. 'Voilà le vrai de l'affaire.'" And later he writes again: "All republican elements in Germany have flung themselves into this fray, which although it has the misfortune to be contrary to the wishes of the population, offers, at all events, this advantage, that it does not necessitate the removal of a sovereign."

Abeken was now thirty-nine years old. On meeting him one would have sought in vain for any of the distinctive qualities of an official. There was about him a strong individuality which characterized him as a man essentially different from others of his class. Not only was he possessed of wide knowledge and varied experience, but he had absorbed that knowledge and experience till it had become, as it were, part of his moral fibre. Powerfully built, he gave the impression of being endowed with an inexhaustible fund of intellectual energy and an immense vitality. Needing, as a rule, very little sleep, he was able to command it at any moment, and it was a common thing for him, after an animated conversation or an intense strain of work, to indulge in a sound and refreshing slumber at the first opportunity, throwing himself again, directly he waked, into the subject of discussion, and taking up his work with the same vivacity and alertness as before.

His life was a hard and laborious one. Too often had he the disappointment of realizing that his toil had been in vain, while it was constantly fraught with much that to his pure and pious nature, could not fail to be deeply painful. He strove with unwearied persistence to counteract the anarchist movement and to procure for Prussia, at least, some *point d'appui* for future action, clutching hopefully at

every sign of energy that might be turned to account, though continually doomed to see it vanish before his eager gaze.

The men who were then the makers of the country's history, were of noble intellect and talents, they dreamed of an ideal world, and aimed at the highest, and yet the result of their labours was to bring destruction. And yet it was from these painful and ignominious conditions that the great men arose under whom Abeken was to serve later on.

Early in September the Berlin National Assembly carried Stein's <sup>1</sup> motion for the Minister of War, which was tantamount to a wholesale extirpation of the army, whilst the National Assembly at Frankfort, threw out the Bill for an armistice with Denmark.

### *To Wildenbruch.*

“BERLIN, September 7, 1848.

“We are confronted with a momentous crisis, at least, I hope so. This evening everything is quiet, and the town mob is full of glee and jubilation; we have no longer anything to fear; to-day we have lost the battle. The people in the street were saying to one another: ‘You can take your rifle home now.’ For the Ministry is in a desperate minority, and Stein’s motion for carrying out this infamous order to the army has been passed by 219 to 152 votes. The Ministers stuck to their resolution not to issue the order. They had, of course, unwisely shown that they might resign. It is, however, not yet certain what they will do. Perhaps an energetic decision may still crop up somewhere. At all events, it is quite clear that no Cabinet is possible for the country and for the King that would act on this vote of the Chamber, and I hope no such War-Minister lurks beneath any Prussian uniform. Surely it is better they should resign, that is, if the King should make up his mind to form a strong and vigorous Ministry, one which is capable of saying

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<sup>1</sup> In the sitting of August 9, 1848, the National Assembly passed the following resolution with regard to the motion brought forward by Deputy Stein: “That the Minister of War be required to issue orders to the army, commanding officers not only to refrain from participating in all reactionary strife and to avoid conflict with civilians, but, to get into touch with their fellow citizens and unite with them thereby showing that they honestly and cordially co-operated in the working out of a National Constitution.” See “Ein Achtundvierziger,” Lothar von Buchers Leben und Werke. By Heinrich von Potschinger. Vol. I. 39, 40.



to the Chamber: We are willing, in order to comply with all requirements of justice, to confer with you on the subject of the Constitution, but you must make up your minds to confine yourselves to that alone; at the first step you take beyond that subject we shall dissolve you! The present one *could* say this; but a better one could say it much better. To-morrow we shall, perhaps, know what is to happen. The position at the present moment is this: the Ministers mean to go to the King at Potsdam to-morrow; but they do not yet know what they are going to advise him (*i.e.* this evening) whether they will ask him to consider the matter or to sleep upon it. May God be his Counsellor. I have no doubt as to what the army will do, for though I have never belonged to it, I think I know it because I love it.

"The more critical our position here, the more necessary it is for Wrangel to assume a strong and resolute attitude. He must now act on his own responsibility and only take orders from himself. Prussia's salvation depends in a large measure on him, and a strong attitude on his part will re-act with immense effect on Berlin, besides holding the army together, and everything now depends on that. Weakness in the Duchies will make us weak here. Do try to make him understand this, either personally, when circumstances next bring you together, or by means of Bülow. It is a blessing that, owing to the dissolution of the Ministry, he cannot be bothered from Frankfort. It will not be easy for the National Assembly to find an organ by which to transmit orders to him."

At length the Ministry sent in their resignation. They would not, however, advise the King to give in and to appoint another Ministry from among the Members of the Chamber; moreover, he himself, was firmly determined not to do so.

### *To Wildenbruch.*

"BERLIN, September 9, 1848.

"The Left is in a very 'piano' state, because the King did not at once send for their leaders and beg them on his knees to form a Ministry. The most likely thing is that we shall have a Ministry composed of Frankfort Deputies, and probably tinged with East Prussian sympathies again. May Heaven mend it!

"We have made the most decided pronouncements everywhere, to Camphausen at Frankfort amongst others. We are in honour bound; our reputation is at stake. Wrangel must feel this."

*To Wildenbruch.**"BERLIN, September 15, 1848.*

"Bülow has just been here and asks me to tell you that he has just been at Potsdam and that the King himself had had the idea of leaving the governing power in Schleswig-Holstein provisionally in Bonin's<sup>1</sup> hands, and thinks it an excellent plan. Also that he, Bülow, spoke about the latter being made Commander-in-Chief, and that his appointment to the post will soon take place; that a balance has been set aside and a credit account will at once be opened to him.

"Beckerath<sup>2</sup> and some of the old Ministers (Auerswald, of course, among them), are with the King to-day, but a few days must in any case elapse before they are able to concoct anything. They will *not* give in to the Chamber, that I believe is positive. It is again reported that the Prussian Deputies, with but few exceptions, declared they would retire from the Assembly if the armistice Bill were thrown out. Would to Heaven they had! But people so seldom keep their word!"

Abeken writes again to Wildenbruch after the fighting in Frankfort,<sup>3</sup> as follows:—

*"BERLIN September 20, 1848.*

"So our armistice, my dear friend, has been the occasion of conflict after all, though in a different way than we imagined, but I hope a better one.

"The last thing we heard this morning at eight o'clock, was that all the barricades in Frankfort and Sachsenhausen had been taken, and the town declared in a state of siege. After such an occurrence, the National Assembly and the Central Power cannot go on any longer on the old tack; they must give in to us now, and perhaps we shall at last learn to give heed to the beckonings of fate. The decisive moment has come sooner than we thought.

"You will have seen in the newspapers the resolutions passed by that crazy popular meeting at the gates of Frankfort on Sunday. During the night an order was telegraphed for two

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<sup>1</sup> Eduard von Bonin, 1793–1865. In 1848 Commander-in-Chief of the Prussian troops in Schleswig. After the armistice of Malmö he became Commander-in-Chief of the Schleswig-Holstein army, and Commandant at Berlin in 1848. Minister of War in 1852.

<sup>2</sup> Hermann von Beckerath, 1801–1870. Leader of the Liberals 1848–1849. Member of the National Assembly and of the Imperial Deputation in Berlin.

<sup>3</sup> The dissatisfaction at the armistice occasioned street disturbances in Frankfort in September, during which Prince Lichnowsky and General von Auerswald were killed.

thousand Prussians and Austrians to be despatched thither. On Monday, while the Assembly was sitting, the populace stormed one of the portals of Paulskirche, but were driven back by the troops. Then the street fighting began, the whole town being full of barricades. On Monday afternoon there was sharp fighting succeeded by a truce and fruitless negotiations. Prince Lichnowsky was very seriously wounded, some accounts say he is dead, and according to tolerably reliable report, General Auerswald has also been shot, though his brother, the Minister, has not, so far heard, anything of it. Troops, to the number of about seven thousand, were in the town on Monday evening, the travellers bring word that cannon and grapeshot were used. The troops were victorious that evening, but there was a tremendous muster of the Republican rabble from all sides, which shows that the thing was pre-arranged and the armistice merely a pretext. Of the course of events on Tuesday we know nothing beyond a telegram in the evening announcing the complete victory of the troops. . . .

“Wrangel had a grand parade in Berlin to-day, and received a fair amount of cheers. He afterwards harangued the officers, addressing himself particularly to those of the Civic Guard who were present, saying, it was their business to look after peace and order, that there was no question of reaction, and that all lawful liberties were to be maintained ; but to ensure this it was necessary that a peaceful condition of affairs should prevail. For this, he said, the Civic Guard were primarily answerable, and, should they not suffice, he would support them. ‘I have, gentlemen, not only the will to do so, but the means.’ He really seems to have succeeded in making the people believe him to be a sort of Cavaignac<sup>1</sup> dictator, and if they think so it is a good thing. The Left are, of course, furious at his proclamation and his speeches, but they are dreadfully crestfallen and discouraged, and the totally unexpected news from Frankfort will bring them quite down on their marrow-bones. It is just the right moment, a little energy now, and all may be well. To-day’s parade is really most reassuring.”

*To Wildenbruch.*

“BERLIN, September 22, 1848.

“This has been a great day here, the reactionary Ministry having taken their places for the first time in the Chamber.

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<sup>1</sup> Eugene Louis Cavaignac, French general. 1848 Minister of War, assuming on June 23rd, the military dictatorship.

Things went off pretty well on the whole, and, above all, quietly. The programme of the new Ministry is couched in somewhat general terms, as you will see from the newspapers. Waldeck<sup>1</sup> brought an angry motion for the repeal of Wrangel's army order. This was set aside, the order of the day (after the manner of Frankfort) not recognizing it as urgent, and it was then withdrawn by Waldeck.

"The Left are very disconsolate, and much afraid of 'Verstehen Sie mir'<sup>2</sup> and his troops. If the Ministry does not allow itself to be lulled into security, and will make use of the ground already gained to advance further, it will be as good as a victory won by fighting. All the more so as coinciding with the present events in Frankfort, where they have won the victory for us, if only we can understand how to make use of it, which I must say, I still despair of."

The new Ministry, however, gave in like the last. An army order was read which the Left justly regarded as an attempt to carry out Stein's motion.

### *To Wildenbruch.*

"BERLIN, September 25, 1848.

"This Ministry has now also capitulated. It has issued an army order omitting, it is true, the most objectionable points, but one with which the whole Chamber has been able to declare itself satisfied, and then can celebrate a feast of reconciliation. So all hope is lost. We may as well plunge deeper in the mire, and as soon as possible, so as to get it over quickly. Some Cavaignac or Napoleon will turn up, and it should be a matter of indifference to us whether we get him here or from Frankfort, only provided that he comes at last.

"I was in despair on Saturday, fearing lest we should lean too much on Frankfort for support; I thought: surely we shall show some energy here. There has not, however, been one sign of it.

"But what is the use of all this talking and writing?

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<sup>1</sup> In the middle of September Wrangel was appointed Commander-in-Chief of all troops in the province of Brandenburg, and at once issued a proclamation expressing his views. Waldeck's unsuccessful motion was the result of this.

<sup>2</sup> Sobriquet of Wrangel; the old Field-Marshal spoke Berlin German and always made incorrect use of "mir" and "mich." V. v. B.



Meantime Struve<sup>1</sup> has invaded Baden with a body of republicans, said to be 3000 strong. However, the Frankfort Ministry has displayed great energy, and promptly despatched a number of troops thither, so that the affair is no doubt suppressed by this time.

"Everything is happening, on both sides, in the Duchies, to involve matters beyond all hope of solution. The Government on the Alsen, and the other one<sup>2</sup> which is against us: I hope we shall have the courage, but how stupid I am to use such a word; we shall extricate ourselves in the long run only by some further poltroonery. The affair is beginning to be well nigh a matter of indifference to me, and will be completely so, as soon as you are out of it. I think you are to be recalled soon, for Stedman<sup>3</sup> is here now. It is to be hoped we shan't let ourselves be duped into appointing him our Commissioner, and so become involved in the affair again! For we are not at all *bound* to have a Commissioner, but are entitled to have one."

*To Wildenbruch.*

"BERLIN, October 2, 1848.

"... So the defection in favour of Frankfort has come to such a pitch that you also are looking that way and want Prussia to throw in her lot with the rest. Et tu Brute! You too, despair of Prussia? Not I! Not though we had ten times worse Ministries than the present one. All this sort of thing is merely temporary, and so long as we preserve our integrity (no matter in how sorry a fashion), there is always a chance of bettering our condition. If, however, we lose self-confidence and allow ourselves to be merged in Germany as subordinate to Frankfort, then all is up with us forever. What has once been renounced can never be regained; we must present a bold face, and if Prussia should fall—well—I am not a Prussian born, but I would rather fall with Prussia than stand with Frankfort!

'*Victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Cætoni!*'

"The present men of Prussia are not Prussians, but we must

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<sup>1</sup> Gustav von Struve, republican agitator and writer. Was imprisoned after the engagement at Stauffen on September 25. Regained his liberty on the occasion of the revolt in Baden in 1848.

<sup>2</sup> After the armistice of Malmö a "Collective Administration" was established in the Duchies, which left much to be desired in the matter of unity.

<sup>3</sup> A landowner, The Imperial Commissioner in Schleswig-Holstein.

see to it that it be possible for the coming men to be Prussians. I am doing all I can to effect this, and am glad to have the correspondence with Copenhagen, for I can word all communications more strongly than when they are given to me. Once on paper, it will go down, and we shall then hold ourselves responsible for it. Things look quite as black to me as to you, but I am not going to give up the courage to believe and to act, until the last moment."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, November 7, 1848.

"For the last week we have been in the midst of a Ministerial crisis the end of which cannot be foreseen. It was expected that a new Ministry would have come into existence yesterday, but to-day's sitting of the Chamber has gone by and still the bomb has not burst. This is very unfortunate, as the feeling in the country is being exploited by the revolutionary party, and it won't be improved by this delay."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, November 8, 1848.

"This morning the new Ministry is announced in the *Staatsanzeiger*. Brandenburg,<sup>1</sup> President, and Minister, ad interim for Foreign Affairs; Manteuffel,<sup>2</sup> Interior; Strotha, War; Kisker, Justice; Ladenberg,<sup>3</sup> Education; Kühne (provisionally), Finance; and Pommer-Esche (provisionally), Commerce and Public Works."

#### JOURNAL.

November 8. With Bülow. Read him the message of the 8th relative to the transference of the Chamber.<sup>4</sup>

November 9. Opposition in the Chamber to the transference. Resolutions by Waldeck and his colleagues. All night

<sup>1</sup> F. W. Count von Brandenburg, 1792-1850. November 2nd, Chief of the Ministry which granted the Constitution. In 1850 he was at Warsaw where he became convinced of the hostile attitude of Russia.

<sup>2</sup> Otto Theodor Frieherr von Manteuffel, 1805-1882. In 1845 Minister for the Interior. As Minister for Foreign Affairs he concluded the Convention of Olmütz with Austria on September 29, 1850, then becoming Minister-President. Resigned 1858. Later a member of the Upper House.

<sup>3</sup> Adelbert von Ladenberg, 1898-1855. Minister for Public Worship 1848-1850.

<sup>4</sup> At that time the Prussian National Assembly was sometimes called the Chamber, and Abeken often refers to it under that designation. The revolutionary party in the Assembly was known as the "Unruh" Club from the name of its leader, Regierungsrat von Unruh.

sitting. Town quiet. Robert Blum shot at Vienna by Court Martial.

November 10. Entry of troops. The "Unruh" Club removed from the theatre between five and six, the building being surrounded.

November 11. The "Unruh" Club finding the doors shut went off to the Hotel de Russie, and in the afternoon, to the Schützenhaus. The evening edition of the *Staatsanzeiger* had the King's proclamation and the order for disbanding the Civic Guard.

November 12. In the morning a portion of the arms was delivered up. Everything in an uncertain state. At four o'clock the city declared in a state of siege. All quiet. A slight disturbance at Potsdam.

November 13. The time allowed for surrendering arms was prolonged till five o'clock Tuesday afternoon. All quiet. A row at Potsdam, and troops despatched thither.

November 15. Some of the arms this side of the Spree were taken possession of without resistance. Wrote to Camphausen to ask him to carry out the disbandment order.

November 20. Simson and Hergenhausen arrived as Imperial Commissioners. New resolutions passed in Frankfort.

November 21. Conference between the Commissioners and the Ministry in the evening.

November 22. Wrote to Camphausen about the position of the Imperial Commissioners.

November 24. Report from Camphausen with the fresh proposals concerning the transference. Arrival and proclamation of the Archduke.<sup>1</sup>

November 26. Gagern<sup>2</sup> arrived early this morning, or late last night, dined with the King at noon.

November 27. Sitting (of the Assembly) at Brandenburg. One hundred and fifty-four members.

November 28. Sitting at Brandenburg. One hundred and fifty-seven members. Further adjournment.

November 29. King's silver wedding.

December 5. Bülow handed over the Ministerial business. The Assembly dissolved. Charter of the Constitution imposed, and announced in the evening edition of the *Staatsanzeiger* (December 6).

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<sup>1</sup> Proclamation "To the German People."

<sup>2</sup> From Frankfort, on no definite errand, but merely for the purpose of communicating the probability of Friedrich Wilhelm IV.'s election.

After the transference of the Assembly to Brandenburg Abeken wrote as follows to his uncle Rudolf:—

“BERLIN, *November 29, 1848.*

“The transference of the Assembly to Brandenburg, whither the Ministers must of course, follow it, complicates matters yet further, and it is only a mercy that our department is without a proper chief at present, and is being temporarily managed by the President of the Ministry, as the Under Secretary of State, who is in charge, can stop on here, not needing to appear before the Chamber. Otherwise I too, should probably have had to go to Brandenburg.”

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“BERLIN, *December 1, 1848.*

“I am waiting for news from Brandenburg. On the whole, I regard the state of affairs with more confidence, and hope that here we will get over our difficulties, and then we can, perhaps, help our dear Germany.”

On October 18, 1848, Abeken was appointed “Legationsrath” in consideration of his tried efficiency and assiduous services. On December 14, he was appointed to his special position in the Foreign Office. He spent Christmas at Osnabrück, Writing on December 30, after his return, to his Uncle Rudolf, he says:—

“Here I am back in old Berlin. Until now I have never felt at home here, but now, oddly enough, for the first time in my life, my return to Berlin has not been painful nor unlike a home-coming, and this, notwithstanding the pleasant home feeling I had at dear Osnabrück. This is because I have found a settled position here, as well as serious and promising work, which, in the long run, can make any place home. I realized this with genuine gratitude as I drove into town late on Thursday evening. Hitherto, no matter whether I came from Osnabrück, Dresden or Rome, I always had a pang as I entered the gate of the town. I am looking forward with a good courage to beginning the new year. Whatever storms may come within or without, to him who is of earnest purpose, Heaven will ever provide a corner wherein to work.”



## CHAPTER II

### IN OFFICE

1849-1850

“Hominum confusione et Dei providentia regitur mundus.”

ABEKEN'S journal throws a sharp light upon the contests between Prussia and Austria, and the discontent, petty jealousy and particularist tendencies of the greater and lesser states of Germany. These affairs and the struggle against anarchy at home, claimed much of his time; and in addition to his other work he was also called upon to serve on a jury, and many were the occasions when he scarcely had time for his meals.

*To Frau Schäfer.*

“BERLIN, *February* 12, 1848.

“DEAR FRIEND,—These are difficult times. A grave crisis is coming, the issue of which, most mercifully, does not rest with men, but with God. The relations between Austria and Prussia and with Germany must be settled within a month. I fear it cannot be done peacefully, and Anarchy and Civil War will follow throughout Germany. Austria will not comply within the given time, at least, her Government will not, and she demands the impossible of Prussia and Germany, namely, *subjection*. Germany, *i.e.* Frankfort, with her persistent striving after unity, is likewise demanding impossible terms of Austria, to which the latter cannot submit, so Prussia will have to act as go-between, the vilest of tasks. Of course the outbursts of revolutionary republicans will make it easier for us, and these will doubtless in the near future, drive the rest of Germany into our arms whether we will or not. Austria cannot help her. The old loyal terms between ourselves and Austria, and between Austria and Germany, will thereby be greatly endangered, and it is a great question whether any sound and lasting arrangement will be the outcome. I fear we shall be tossed hither and thither in the throes of a convulsion that will last for many decades.”

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“BERLIN, *March 13, 1849.*

“This is the first chance I have had for writing, and it is not a quiet one, for I am in great excitement at the news from Frankfort. Welcker<sup>1</sup> brought forward a motion yesterday for the National Assembly to accept the draft of the Committee on the Constitution and to invest Prussia with the hereditary imperial dignity, urging that the other German Princes be invited to give their assent, and to appoint a deputation to submit this important resolution to the King of Prussia. . . . What then? The King will find an answer difficult. . . .”

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“BERLIN, *Good Friday, April 6, 1849.*

“The political world will get a few days' rest as the Assemblies have been adjourned both here and in Frankfort. So perhaps the excited feelings will have time to cool down at home during the holidays. You, like all sensible people, will have been pleased with the King's reply to the deputation. He could not go further. I was really delighted with it and never dreamed it could have been taken so amiss. But it has been misunderstood by those who stick hard and fast to their own opinions and claims, and recognize no others, and who, therefore, would be satisfied with nothing save an unconditional acceptance of the Constitution. That was what the Frankforters were aiming at. They would have liked to see the governments withhold their consent in the hope that the King would say: ‘I will accept the crown and the Constitution, and it is for the separate states now to declare whether they will join us.’ But this would have been exercising coercion over the governments, since if Prussia had accepted the Constitution they would hardly have been able to hesitate longer; but as it was, the Constitution was impossible of acceptance.”

## JOURNAL.

April 11. Prokesch<sup>2</sup> handed in a reply protesting against our Circular of the 3rd instant. In the First Chamber a “motion of urgency” for a fresh address to the King, on the

<sup>1</sup> Karl Theodor Welcker, 1790–1869. Member of the Second Chamber, Baden, and Liberal Leader, 1831; Member of the Diet and of the National Assembly, 1848. Brought the offer of the Imperial dignity to the King of Prussia, March 12th, 1849.

<sup>2</sup> Anton Count Prokesch-Osten, Austrian Minister in Berlin, 1849–1852. Presiding Minister at the Diet in Frankfort in 1853.

German Question, was thrown out by seventy-five to thirty-eight. The Frankfort Assembly passed a formal resolution to adhere to the Constitution and the Law of Election.

April 12. Wrote a despatch to Count Bernstorff.<sup>1</sup> To a Council held by the King ; Camphausen and the Prince of Prussia there. Decided on the instructions for Camphausen to leave to-night.

April 19. The Minister told me that it had been discussed in Council whether to give the declaration at once on the three points : (1) Readiness to be at the head of a Confederacy ; (2) but any talk of an Emperor utterly excluded ; and (3) the impossibility of accepting a Constitution. The decision will be taken to-morrow. General Bonin marched into Jutland with the Schleswig-Holsteiners and occupied Kolding.

April 21. The Cabinet announced in the Second Chamber that they could not advise the King to accept the Constitution. The Chamber adopted the clause of the Rodbertus Bill, recognizing the validity of the Frankfort Constitution. Proposal by Glinka for a Danish Armistice.

April 25. Despatch from Camphausen concerning the declaration of the 21st, and requesting to be given his congé.

April 26. Second Chamber passed a resolution against the state of siege, by one hundred and eighty-four votes to one hundred and thirty-nine.

April 27. Second Chamber dissolved. This was decided upon in the morning at Bellevue, having been discussed the previous evening. Disturbances in the evening on the Dönhoff Platz. Firing, two killed.

April 28. Decree for the dissolution of the Saxon Chamber.

April 29. This evening the King sent a letter, date April 28th, to Camphausen, which appeared immediately in the *Staats-anzeiger*. Town quiet.

April 30. The French attack on Rome repulsed. At one o'clock summoned to the Cabinet. Radowitz<sup>2</sup> there. Made alterations in circular. Assistance offered. Constitution accepted with revisions. Circular posted in the evening. (In the morning the Cabinet spoke

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<sup>1</sup> Albrecht Count von Bernstorff, 1809-1873. Minister in Munich in 1845 ; in Vienna 1848 ; in Naples 1852 ; in London 1854. Minister for Foreign Affairs in Berlin 1861-1862, and afterwards Ambassador in London.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph von Radowitz, 1797-1853. Prussian general and statesman. In Vienna 1848 ; in Berlin 1849 ; on September 25th, 1850, took over the portfolio for Foreign Affairs, but retired in November 2nd.

to Radowitz about "The breach between us and Austria.")<sup>1</sup> The National Assembly at Frankfort passed a resolution for extraordinary sittings at any time and place—appeal to the people—&c.

May 3. Fighting in Dresden.

May 5. The Tsar Alexander regiment of Grenadier Guards went off to Dresden<sup>2</sup> by train.

May 6. The troops in Dresden have taken the Neumarkt and the adjacent streets.

May 7. The evening edition of the *Staatsanzeiger* had the decrees and orders to the Oberpräsidenten with regard to the resolutions of Frankfort, and also published the correspondence with Bannermann.<sup>3</sup> Savigny<sup>4</sup> left this morning for Dresden, in consequence of an additional request for intervention. Fighting still continues in Dresden.

May 9. Dresden completely subdued. Ineffectual Conference at Frankfort between Gagern, the Plenipotentiaries and Deputies concerning the dissolution of the Assembly and the Imperial Administratorship for Prussia. Savigny back from Dresden.

May 10. Morning with Herr von Radowitz. Read through the memorial. Resolution in Frankfort against the violation by Prussia of the peace of the Empire.<sup>5</sup> Gagern Ministry resigned. Herr von Canitz<sup>6</sup> started for Vienna.

May 14. At night wrote out in its final form the motion for an order to recall the Deputies from Frankfort, and the instructions for Lt.-Colonel Fischer. Reported on both these questions to the Cabinet this morning. In the evening Lt.-Colonel Fischer left to take the Imperial Administrator the proposals and the authorization for Peucker.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> With regard to the two parties in Frankfort: the *Greater* German party with Austria at the head, and the *Lesser* German party with Prussia at the head and without Austria. Meanwhile neither of the sovereigns would have anything to do with the Constitution recommended by the National Assembly at Frankfort.

<sup>2</sup> Sent by Prussia to assist in subduing an insurrection, set on foot by a party which hoped to carry through the Frankfort Constitution by force of arms.

<sup>3</sup> Friedrich Daniel Bannermann, 1811–1855. Baden deputy; Member of the National Assembly in Frankfort; sent to Berlin for the purpose of establishing an understanding between Prussia and Frankfort.

<sup>4</sup> Carl Friedrich von Savigny, 1814–1875. Prussian diplomatist; 1849 at the Foreign Office; 1850 Envoy Extraordinary at the Court of Baden.

<sup>5</sup> On account of Dresden.

<sup>6</sup> K. Wilhelm Ernst, Baron von Canitz und Dallwitz. Born 1787. From 1845–1848 Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>7</sup> Eduard von Peucker, 1791–1876. Prussian General. In 1848 military commissioner in Frankfort-on-Maine. Later Imperial War Minister. In command of the Federal troops during the insurrection in Baden.



- May 15. Proclamation from the King to his people on the German question.
- May 16. Resolution by the Frankfort National Assembly that the recall of the Prussian delegates was not valid. Fifty-six of the Prussian delegates declared their intention not to retire.
- May 20. Prokesch communicated the Austrian memorandum refusing our proposals and recommending a provisional triumvirate.<sup>1</sup> The Ministry cannot come to a decision about withdrawing the troops from Frankfort.
- May 21. The Saxon Deputies recalled from Frankfort. Resignation of Gagern, Dahlmann and sixty-five others. The Radowitz protocol signed at Berlin by Saxony and Hanover.
- May 23. Wrote to Schleinitz telling him to come here to negotiate with Reedtz.
- May 24. Arrest of Berends and fourteen others.
- May 30. The Frankfort Assembly resolved to move to Stuttgart.
- May 31. Publication of the new Electoral Law.
- June 2. Prokesch claimed his right to see the Act of Federation. Replied not acknowledging his right but promising to let him see it.
- June 3. Ministerial Council passed a resolution to open an attack on the Rhine without waiting for the requisition from Bavaria (that from Baden and Darmstadt had arrived).
- June 6. The Rump Parliament in Stuttgart have resolved to set up a Regency, and Raveaux, Vogt, Schüler, H. Simon and Becker have been nominated regents.
- June 10.<sup>3</sup> In the morning wrote memorial for the Prince of Prussia. This evening the Prince of Prussia left for Mainz *via* Köln.
- June 12. Prince of Prussia fired at at Ingelheim.
- June 30. The troops have crossed the Murg and are advancing on Oos.
- July 6. In the night of July 5-6 the Danes made a sortie from Fredericia.

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<sup>1</sup> In the middle of May 1849 Radowitz opened a Conference for discussing the question of a German Constitution. In this Conference Bavaria, Saxony, Hanover and the lesser states took part. On the first day Austria was also represented, but directly afterwards she sent in a refusal by her Minister Prokesch, submitting at the same time a memorandum of her own proposals.

<sup>2</sup> In the Bavarian Palatinate and in Baden republican disturbances had broken out. The Prince of Prussia was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Federal troops, and put down the Baden insurrection on June 21.

July 10. The armistice and peace preliminaries signed this afternoon at five o'clock.

August 7. Opening of the Chamber in the Weisse Saal.

August 25. Radowitz laid a proposal before the Chamber. Heard Radowitz' speech.

September 6. Debate in the second Chamber upon the German question. Reichensperger<sup>1</sup> advocated the cause of Austria.

September 7. The King at Teplitz. Interview with the Emperor of Austria.

September 14. In the morning Meyendorff<sup>2</sup> was with the Minister. He handed in the despatch about Switzerland, and the *avis confidentielle a pour condition union, si elle veut retenir la place*. In the evening a Cabinet Council about Biegeleben and Schleswig. Counter proposal: Disarmament. Resolved: Another regiment to be sent to Schleswig.

### *To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“BERLIN, *September 14, 1849.*

“I am happier and more easy in my mind than a year ago. Severe struggles are, indeed, before us, but we have now, at least, people who are willing to fight. This time a year ago, it looked exactly as if every one had given up the struggle, and as if we could expect nothing but cowardly and pusillanimous submission and a gradual sinking deeper into the fathomless abyss. Now we are clear of these conditions.”

### JOURNAL.

September 27. Despatch from Werther with Prince Schwarzenberg's<sup>3</sup> first declarations as to our wording of the provisional arrangement

September 28. A despatch from Bernstorff<sup>4</sup> in cipher saying he has succeeded in surmounting Prince Schwarzenberg's objections to our proposals, so that no concessions should be made to Prokesch. Interpellation in the second Chamber

<sup>1</sup> August Reichensperger. Member of the Frankfort Parliament in 1848. In 1853 originated the Roman Catholic split in the Prussian Chamber.

<sup>2</sup> Russian Minister in Berlin. In 1850 went to Vienna where he took part in the Conference at Olmütz.

<sup>3</sup> Prince Felix Schwarzenberg, 1800-1852. President of the Austrian Ministry from 1848 to April 1852.

<sup>4</sup> “The proposals referred to are the Convention signed September 30. Bernstorff was negotiating in Vienna, Prokesch in Berlin, so having been successful in Vienna he did not wish more to be conceded to Prokesch.” V. v. B.

on the German navy. Schleinitz said: "It would be a breach of faith."

*To Wildenbruch.*

"BERLIN, October 11, 1849.

"I was in Dresden for three days last week to attend my uncle Christel's silver wedding. From all I heard, public feeling there is still very bad *without any definite object*. There is dislike of the Government, envy and jealousy of Prussia, and fear of Austria; a tendency prevails to democracy of the shallowest kind; and perpetual quarrels and disputes are rife among the soldiers who have been fighting in Schleswig, and who have been engaged in Dresden. On the Government side there exists an unconcealed aversion to the Prussian Alliance, though there is no prospect so far of being able to rely upon Austria, nor does Austria show signs of making advances of any kind. Our Chargé d'Affaires there<sup>1</sup> is an absolute cipher as you are well aware. In other respects there are but few perceptible traces of the revolution, and the state of siege is less stringently enforced even than in Berlin.

"I am glad to be able to tell you that we have come to terms with Austria about the Provisional Power. On September 30 Bernstorff concluded an agreement with Prince Schwarzenberg, and yesterday our ratification was sent off. . . . Nothing is yet settled as to the Presidency, a purely business arrangement has been made. The *ad interim* Government lasts until May 1, 1850. You see it is not such a bad settlement of affairs, as it is based upon complete *parity*. Anyway, it is a much better position than we have ever had before either in the days of the Diet or under the Imperial Administrator; and we have into the bargain, the means of protecting ourselves against anything that is prejudicial to our interests. It is the first time Austria has recognized this dual *parity*, and I believe that it has opened the way for an understanding to be arrived at as to the definitive form of government, and a milder tone seems already to prevail in the Austrian Cabinet. I have reason to suppose that Austria will now let us do what we want with regard to the Federation, and that Benningsen,<sup>2</sup> and Beust<sup>3</sup> have left Vienna much less edified than they expected to be.

<sup>1</sup> In Dresden.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Count von Benningsen, well known in parliamentary life. From 1848-1850 Minister-President in Hanover.

<sup>3</sup> Friedrich Ferdinand Count von Beust, 1809-1886. May 1848 Saxon Minister in Berlin. 1849 Saxon Minister for Foreign Affairs. In 1886 entered the service of Austria.

"The Germanophiles will, however, strongly oppose this agreement. There have already been violent disputes in the working committee about the assembling of the Reichstag. Saxony has not yet declared her opinion; Hanover has declared herself as dead against it; while all the others are, of course, for it. Luckily, Hanover has taken up an utterly new and absurd position, arguing that although joining is optional, yet it is necessary also to have the consent of those who don't join. From this it follows that the whole business of May 26 was unjustifiable, and this Hanover is already beginning to say! Naturally she could have said it on May 6, and then need not have signed; but she comes now, after taking part in the whole business, and declares her own action as unjustifiable. In this way she is putting a much stronger weapon into our hands than if she had taken up her stand upon her non-participation and had merely demanded a reconstruction of the Constitution."

#### JOURNAL.

- October 13. Entry of the Prince of Prussia at one o'clock with a battalion of the Landwehr. Saw the Prince enter.
- October 17. Draft of the Joint-Note arrived from Vienna.
- October 18. Birthday of the Prince of Prussia's son, who attains his majority.
- October 23. Protest came from the Dutch Government against the passage of troops. Wrote to the Minister of War on the subject. Wrote to him and to Count Bernstorff about the "Gefion."<sup>1</sup>
- October 24. Document on the German question laid before the Second Chamber, and Beckerath's previous interpellation replied to. In the afternoon peremptory declaration sent to the Stadtholder with respect to the passage of the troops.
- November 1. The First Chamber sat in Commission with Radowitz. King left for Vienna.
- November 2. Assent received from Saxony and Reuss.
- November 4. Assent received from the King of Denmark to the Federal Commission. The Imperial Government's instructions of the 28th to Peucker arrived, in which it was stated that it would be better to blow up the "Gefion" rather than let it fall into the hands of Prussia. Telegraphic despatch saying that the application concerning the "Gefion" had been sent off from Vienna to Frankfort on 1st November.

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<sup>1</sup> On April 5, 1849, the frigate "Gefion" had been taken at Eckernförde.



November 8. In the morning wrote an article on the "Gefion" for the *Staatsanzeiger*. Had a talk with Radowitz at the Foreign Office on German affairs.

Writing to his friend, Frau Schäfer from Berlin on January 1, 1850, Abeken says:—

"The beginning of a new year is always a solemn time with me, for I like, at least, to think over the past and survey the present. In a long course of years I have learnt not to look forward to the future."

And writing again later, he says, after a short retrospect of his Egyptian travels and the disheartening condition of things he found prevailing in Germany on his return:—

"But I brought back with me from the East a certain repose, in the habit acquired of looking beyond the present and reckoning time by thousands or by hundreds of years. The chief fault in our day is that we want to have everything now, at the moment, and for our own enjoyment. Sir Stratford Canning complained that no statesman looked forward more than twenty years. But now, who reckons, or indeed, dares to reckon, even ten years ahead? The believer alone may do so, who views everything in its relation to eternity. He, however, who has to reckon and to act in relation to time, must content himself with doing all that the exigencies of the day and the hour demand. And often it is no small thing to bring even one day to a happy termination: the *night* is in God's hands, and with it the coming morrow.

"I often regret I am so entirely cut off from all intellectual pursuits, but I don't complain of it for I am contented with my position and employment. I think I have an aptitude for this kind of work, having acquired a grip of it comparatively quickly and, with satisfaction, I believe, to my superiors, who show confidence in me.

"Many disintegrating and disruptive forces are at work on men's minds, and human means and institutions have power to elevate only in so far as they are combined with a regard for something higher. But then it is only from above that men's eyes can be opened to higher things. So much the more is it necessary for those who are like-minded to hold together."

## CHAPTER III

### WARSAW AND OLMÜTZ

1850

"Come what come may,  
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, February 14, 1850.

"EVER since February 6, when the Constitution was established by the oath of the King, it is as though a great load were removed from us all. Not only has the King bound himself, but he has placed the work itself under Divine protection, so that it need no longer be regarded as a mere human institution, but can claim to be revered as an illustration of the text: 'The powers that be are ordained of God.' And this sacred quality will cover the shortcomings and defects, of which indeed, there are plenty. At all events, a foundation has been made upon which to build. The unhappy period of beginning over and over again is now, thank God, behind us, at least, we have done our best, King and State alike, to bring it to an end. And if it please God to send us more moments of agitating crisis, well, we must trust to His hand to lead us through them. This applies to Prussian affairs. Would we had got as far with the German ones! But we won't talk of them. It is too dismal a chapter to open, while this beautiful sunshine is flooding heaven and earth."

To attempt the portrayal of the chaos and dissension then prevailing in German affairs, or to describe with any measure of accuracy the varied character of Abeken's occupations, would lead us beyond the scope of the present work. His duties were chiefly concerned with the question of the Schleswig-Holstein peace, and the unity of Germany, both in her Home and Foreign relations. From his brief journals it is clear that all experiments were foredoomed to failure; for in the life of states as of individuals, rights

and duties should ever go hand in hand ; in those days however, every one wished to win something, while none was inclined to make the smallest sacrifice. King Friedrich Wilhelm IV., with his intellectual tastes and natural inclination to all that was noble, had suffered both mentally and physically from the strain of the year 1848, and had lost that sympathy with both people and princes which forms so integral a part of the power to do great deeds. Meanwhile Prince Schwarzenberg turned to skilful account every weakness of Prussia. From time to time he would come forward with proposals of an acceptable nature, only to alter or withdraw them so soon as Prussia appeared to him incapable or undesirous of going to war.

At the beginning of May,<sup>1</sup> a Congress of Princes was held in Berlin to consider the question of union, Hesse Cassel, however, disassociated herself from it at once. Austria at the same time convoked a Conference of the states friendly to her at Frankfort, for the purpose of reviving the old Diet.

On May 16, 1850, Abeken writes as follows to his Uncle Rudolf :—

“ After all, Nature is a faithful mother. She never forsakes the children of men, and shows a loving solicitude even for the erring and the fallen ; whereas the spirit which has fathered the race, oft-times seems to turn from them in anger and chastisement, and to disinherit them altogether. This is true at the present time in the case of the German people. The genius of the nation seems utterly to have forsaken and repudiated them as his heritage. Has ever a more dismal picture of disunion been seen than that now presented by Germany ?

“ I think I may say Prussia has done her best. Errors, she has, indeed, committed, but believe me, her *intentions* have been honest, and she does not harbour those ambitious designs which Stuve<sup>2</sup> attributes to her. Weak and inconsequent we may often be, but consciously dishonest like Austria, never !

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<sup>1</sup> From the 9th till the 16th of May.

<sup>2</sup> A Hanoverian who from 1848 to October 1850 was Minister in Hanover, and afterwards Burgomaster of Osnabrück. Abeken had great affection and esteem for him, and it was to him, therefore, a matter of profound regret when a temporary estrangement took place between himself and his fellow-countryman owing to political circumstances, Hanover assuming an attitude friendly to Austria.

However severely history may censure us, it will none the less bear a witness to our conduct which our contemporaries refuse to give.

"On the whole I am satisfied with what is now being done. The resolutions of the Congress of Princes are sensible, moderate and suited to the occasion, though probably they won't content either party. I think all that is possible has been done, the rest is in God's hands."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, September 14, 1850.

"The unhappy state of affairs in Hesse Cassel naturally has a paramount claim on our attention, though we see no reason to fear, like you good Hanoverians, that we shall be called upon to assist in carrying out Hassenpflug's<sup>1</sup> measures against a country which, till now, has met all provocation with admirable calm, and whose Radical party is even more Conservative than the Government. But what is it all going to lead to, and how can the governments hope by such means to establish the principles of loyalty and authority? Now truly has Niebuhr's<sup>2</sup> prophecy been fulfilled, only that he foresaw the time as rather nearer at hand than it actually was. God keep our dear country of Hanover, and especially our native town, and grant that the same condition of affairs may not arise there, and lead from one injustice to another. Well may we deem these happy, who have been spared the sight of such things. At the same time, a true and honest-minded man like my dear father, would have stood firm in these days, and such men often diffuse a beneficial influence on their surroundings."

Living in an atmosphere of constant mental strain and thankless toil, Abeken's health frequently suffered; nevertheless, a day seldom passed on which he did not go to the Foreign Office, and even when in bed he would write out the despatches entrusted to him. This causes his uncle Rudolf to write to him in an admonitory tone:—

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Hassenpflug, 1794–1862. Minister for Hesse Cassel in 1837, and Minister-President in 1850–1855. Overthrew the Liberal Constitution and the country was declared under martial law. Austria which had revived the old Diet on September 2, 1850, wished to come to the assistance of the Elector. Prussia, not recognizing the revival of the Diet, hastened to the help of the country, so that Austria and Prussia, though still outwardly at peace, were confronting one another with armed force.

<sup>2</sup> Berthold George Niebuhr, 1776–1831. Historian. Minister at the Papal Court in 1815, and from 1823 Professor at Bonn.



"I believe every word you say, my dear Heinrich, except when you write from your sick-bed and tell me your indisposition is of no consequence. For I know how much it takes to make you keep your bed, and how careful you always are to spare us anxiety. I congratulate you on being made Legationsrath, and heartily hope your work may give you satisfaction and be rich in blessing to you. . . . You can't have the former without the latter."

On September 8, 1850, Abeken had been appointed a "Legationsrath" in recognition of his indefatigable activity and distinguished services.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, October 28, 1850.

"Things have reached such an acute phase<sup>1</sup> that it seems scarcely possible to find any peaceful solution—but, found it will be, and an instinct, a fairly certain one, so I believe, tells me *that we* shall not have war. Whether our position will be altogether a good one, whether we shall not for a long time have to proceed by half moves, is another question, and a very melancholy one withal. Still, to 'take no thought for the morrow' is not only true in its personal application, but in a certain sense also in the field of politics and national life!

"All who love their country must be filled with sorrow to hear of Stuve's resignation.<sup>2</sup> His trusty hand has steered the ship of state so successfully (at least, so far as the internal policy of the country is concerned; for I cannot approve his foreign policy), and he has fortunately preserved it from the shipwreck to which most of the other states have been victims. I still continue, not only to respect him, but to love him, but I must sorrowfully admit that his desertion of Prussia and return to the old Diet have greatly contributed to the ruin of Germany."

#### JOURNAL.

October 29, 1850. Despatch to General Hahn<sup>3</sup> with the Stadtholder's Note. Armistice under nonsensical conditions. The King has given up his shooting, and the Queen her

<sup>1</sup> Negotiations were going on with Austria and also with Russia on the subject of Denmark and Holstein. Russia took the part of Austria. Two Conferences were held at Warsaw. (Journal for October 21, 1850.)

<sup>2</sup> The Journal for October 21, 1850, contains news of a fresh Ministerial crisis in Hanover.

<sup>3</sup> In Schleswig.

journey to Dresden. Despatch from Warsaw which Radowitz took to the King at twelve o'clock; the King very determined. Instructed as to a reply to the Russo-Hessian despatches.<sup>1</sup> Wrote at once, and submitted it to the Minister.

October 30. Wrote an answer to the Stadtholder. Telegraphic despatch from Brandenburg saying he had written or had signed a preliminary agreement with Schwarzenberg. Brandenburg is sending in a paper<sup>2</sup> on the Holstein affair in very curt terms, and Radowitz is replying in like terms. An answer to the Russo-Holstein Note has been written. The King when at the Minister's desired the reply to Russia should not be sent until Brandenburg's return. Telegraphic despatch in the evening to say that the advance of the Bavarians had been stopped.<sup>3</sup>

October 31. Count Brandenburg and Flemming<sup>4</sup> arrived early this morning. Radowitz had an interview with Brandenburg. Brandenburg to Potsdam. Indications of a Ministerial crisis. Another telegraphic despatch at noon to say that the Bavarian troops have been ordered not to advance. Telegraphic despatch from Bernstorff saying that the Austrians will shortly have 100,000 men in Bohemia, ready to march through Saxony on Berlin. Had a talk with Flemming at the Foreign Office. Wrote a memorandum on Schleswig-Holstein.

November 1. About 10.30, the Minister at the Assembly. Debate on the German Question till three o'clock. At five the Ministers to the King at Potsdam. Lively debate; the Prince of Prussia called out: 'It's a second 19th of March.' The majority against Radowitz, who said he did not wish to remain in office. During the night the King wrote him again. *The* Bavarians are entering Hanau. Wildenbruch to see me; at his request spoke with Radowitz for a moment. Anxiety and uncertainty still prevail at the Foreign Office.

November 2. Radowitz sent the King his resignation this morning at ten o'clock. The King held another Cabinet

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<sup>1</sup> The Hassenpflug affair.

<sup>2</sup> From Russia.

<sup>3</sup> After the meeting of the Emperor of Austria with the King of Bavaria, and the King of Würtemberg at Bregenz, the Federal execution to Hesse was with Bavarian troops.

<sup>4</sup> Count Flemming, Prussian Minister at Baden. Married Armgart, daughter of Bettina and Achim von Arnim.

Council at Bellevue. Radowitz and Ladenberg against the rest. Von der Heydt<sup>1</sup> with Radowitz at first, but afterwards joined the others. Radowitz desires armed intervention. All the others are opposed to it. The King declared himself ready to arm, and said that he personally felt he ought to make war with Austria, but he must yield to the majority, since he could not form another Ministry.

"General Groeben marched our troops into Hesse Cassel.<sup>2</sup> Heard at the Foreign Office of Radowitz's resignation. He returned from Bellevue at three o'clock. Spent a quarter of an hour with him and he told me everything very quietly. At seven was called to Count Brandenburg to write a despatch to Count Bernstorff."

November 3. Count Brandenburg taken ill in the night. Manteuffel is taking counsel with Radowitz. The latter has acted in a most self-sacrificing manner. I went up to see him with Count Flemming, he is a splendid fellow! Manteuffel to submit the despatch to the King. Sent it off to Count Bernstorff in the evening, Count Brandenburg signing it. The King issued a Cabinet order entrusting Brandenburg, and eventually Manteuffel, with the conduct of affairs at the Foreign Office.

November 4. Note from Prokesch about the evacuation of Hesse. Sent the despatch of yesterday to St. Petersburg at seven this evening. Count Brandenburg signed it. Manteuffel still seeking counsel. Radowitz to Potsdam this afternoon. General Hahn arrived in the evening bringing a refusal from the Stadtholder. Manteuffel said this morning, that our chief aim must be to detach Russia; that we are not on any account going to give up everything; and that if the Austrians behave unreasonably we shall mobilize.

November 6. At eight o'clock Radowitz by train to Erfurt. The Ministry in the presence of the King resolved to mobilize. Telegraphed this to Vienna. Sent instructions to Groeben not to let any political considerations prevail, only military ones. Rochow declined going to St. Petersburg on account of the mobilization. Bernstorff sent word that Schwarzenberg is to give him an answer on the

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<sup>1</sup> August Freiherr von der Heydt, 1801-1874. Finance Minister in the Brandenburg-Manteuffel Ministry, and again from 1866-1869.

<sup>2</sup> Groeben appeared at first inclined to oppose the re-establishment of the Diet.

6th, and that he will leave that evening. Schwarzenberg will not engage in any negotiations until Hesse is evacuated.

November 7. As Rochow will not go, the King is sending an adjutant to St. Petersburg with an autograph letter for the Tzar. Thile has been called to Berlin. Sent off despatch to Bockelberg<sup>1</sup> about mobilization.

On the morning of November 6, news was received of the sudden death of Count Brandenburg. Radowitz and Brandenburg had, each in his own way, the welfare of their sovereign and country at heart. The former was in favour of war, being of opinion that Prussia, even though standing alone, was well able to defend herself. Brandenburg, on the other hand, who had observed the clouds which threatened in the east and west, was inclined for war only under certain conditions. He died, as he had lived, for his country, his death being due to distress at the failure of his Mission to Russia.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“BERLIN, November 7, 1850.

“Count Brandenburg’s death is a very sad event. He was one of the best, noblest and most lovable men I have ever known, and the close relations in which I stood to him, the great kindness and confidence he showed me, will be an ever precious memory to me. I was almost the last person to see him before his illness, having left him on Saturday night at half-past nine after receiving his approval of some work I had submitted to him. At five o’clock the next morning the attack of fever came on, which carried him off in a short time. He was waked by Markus Niebuhr<sup>2</sup> at two o’clock that night with a message from the King, and it was catching cold then which doubtless accelerated the attack.

“What vicissitudes there are in things human! On November 9, 1848, he went to the National Assembly, manifestly at the peril of his life, and by his moral and physical courage saved the fatherland in the face of the malice and sneers of a deluded townsfolk. On November 9, 1849, those same dwellers in the capital, having come to their senses, testified their gratitude to him by a brilliant fête; and on November 9, 1850, the same people will follow his body to the grave.

<sup>1</sup> Herr von Bockelberg, Legationsrath.

<sup>2</sup> Markus von Niebuhr, 1817–1860. Cabinet Councillor of Friedrich Wilhelm IV. and supporter of his liberal reforms.



"He may be esteemed happy, for surely he has been spared much sorrow. But his family is inconsolable. His wife, who had been at the brilliant festivities at Warsaw, and in the company of her bosom-friend, the Tsarina, returned but three days after he did, and only arrived just in time to close his eyes. It was exactly a case of

'. . . Auf einmal in die Kreise  
Der Freude mit Gigantenschritt  
Geheimnißvoll nach Geisterweise  
Ein ungeheures Schicksal tritt.'

"All our thoughts and feelings, therefore, are divided at this moment between suspense at the political crisis, and sympathy for an event which has deprived the King and the country of a man whose honesty was almost the sole thing which sustained people's confidence in the Ministry. Radowitz has left Berlin and is gone to Erfurt, having far too much integrity as a man to head the Opposition, which as a statesman he could and, perhaps, ought to do, in that case it would be an easy matter for him to overturn the Ministry. He has been our chief only five weeks, but of all whom we have had, no one has been so much beloved and so regretted by every one in the department, from the highest to the lowest. He is a wonderful and remarkable man; born to rule, when he might have said like Cæsar: 'You carry Cæsar and his fortune!'<sup>1</sup> It is the peculiarity of good luck, that it seems born with some people and denied to others."

#### JOURNAL.

November 8. Shots exchanged between the outposts at Fulda.

The Austrian reply of the 6th arrived to our despatch of the 3rd. They want a definite expression from us, and desire a guarantee, namely the withdrawal of our troops from Hesse Cassel, before they will leave off arming, or agree to a Conference, to be held at Vienna. Le Coq<sup>2</sup> is dictating a reply to this demand this afternoon. A Cabinet Council will consider it this evening. Bernstorff reported to be ill in bed. Cabinet Council sitting till eleven. Orders to Groeben to retire along the military road.<sup>3</sup>

November 9. Count Brandenburg's funeral this morning. Afternoon, Conference between Manteuffel and Prokesch.

<sup>1</sup> "Caesarem vehis, Caesarisque fortunam." Cæsar's remark to a pilot in a storm.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Under Secretary of State.

<sup>3</sup> After the encounter between the outposts at Bronzell, November 8, 1850, near Fulda in Hesse Cassel.

All the guarantees promised. Count Lehndorff leaves with the answer to-night. We agree to everything, but shall occupy the roads till we have a guarantee. Wrote the special despatch. Wrote to Le Coq.

Manteuffel says :

“ If it were but a week later we could use different language.” Despatch from Peucker saying that the Diet has decided that the Bavarian troops are not to advance.

November 10. Prokesch has handed in a Note to the effect that Prince Schwarzenberg has received intelligence of the Prussian attack at Fulda ; he has, in consequence, received injunctions to inquire if we are going to evacuate Hesse or not. It will depend on our answer whether he has to demand his passport at once, or whether he will still be able to co-operate with us in the peace negotiations.

“ In reply, yesterday's despatch will be communicated to him, with the intimation that this, and the orders given to Groeben to retire and avoid all conflict, orders which Groeben has already got, and for which Prince Thurn and Taxis has thanked him, should be sufficient answer to his Note ; that as for the outpost engagement, it is a mere nothing. Despatch from Meyendorff to Nesselrode,<sup>1</sup> communicated ; it states that the reply of the 6th is really a refusal, but that this does not make it necessary to give an answer yet ; that Schwarzenberg regards the mobilization with favour, as making it easier for Prussia to give in.”

November 20. Finished the memorial for Manteuffel early this morning at the Foreign Office, and took it to him in the evening.

November 21. Draft from Le Coq of a despatch to Bernstorff upon the French armament question. What will come of it ?

November 21. Opening of the Chambers.

November 25. Dinner at Prince Karl's.<sup>2</sup> Sent for afterwards by Manteuffel ; ordered to start for Olmütz to-night. Waited till eleven o'clock for the reply from Vienna. As it did not come I did not start.

November 26. To Manteuffel at half-past six. Nothing had come. Towards noon intelligence arrived that Schwarzenberg

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Robert von Nesselrode, Russian Imperial Chancellor.

<sup>2</sup> Prince Karl Friedrich Alexander, 1801-1883, Prince of Prussia, brother of the King.

did not wish the interview until we should have given a favourable reply to Prokesch's Note (Austrian guarantee of the 23rd with regard to the occupation of Hesse Cassel). The journey, therefore, seems to be abandoned. To the Foreign Office at half-past ten. Le Coq arrived there from Potsdam with orders to start to-morrow.

November 27. To Manteuffel at half-past six. Left Berlin at eight.

November 28. Reached Olmütz about six. After dinner Manteuffel to the Prince; back at one o'clock. Little hope. Ingless<sup>1</sup> sent to Vienna to telegraph this to Berlin. Busy formulating all kinds of propositions till two o'clock. The Prince begged us to stop on till the next day.

November 29. Up at half-past six. Made all manner of proposals. Nothing right. Terms suggested by Manteuffel would not do either, as they contained nothing but concessions. At eight o'clock a fresh set of terms proposed with the same concessions, but adopting the principle of joint decision. At eight o'clock Manteuffel to Meyendorff. When he returned at half-past nine I gave him the proposals I had drawn up and he took them to Schwarzenberg. Back at one. They are practically accepted. Wrote out a fresh copy with emendations which Schwarzenberg accepted.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, December 3, 1850.

"It has been a strange journey. You will wonder at my going, and I am surprised myself. On Monday evening I was sent for by Manteuffel, the Minister for the Interior, who has also supervision of the Foreign Department, and from him I received the first information of his probable departure that night, and that I was to accompany him. So I hastily packed and waited until eleven. However, there was one despatch which had not come, so the journey was postponed until Tuesday morning, and when the expected despatch still failed to arrive, it was pretty well given up. I received orders unexpectedly on Tuesday evening for the next morning, and on Wednesday at eight A.M. we left by the train for Breslau; the Minister, a Councillor from his Department, (Count Eulenburg),<sup>2</sup> the most

<sup>1</sup> King's Messenger.

<sup>2</sup> Friedrich Albrecht Count zu Eulenburg, 1815-1881. In the Finance Department in 1848; 1849 appointed to the Ministry of the Interior; 1862-1878 Minister of the Interior.

agreeable of companions, and myself. Got to Breslau that evening and spent the night there. On again on Thursday morning, accompanied by President von Schleinitz, an able man, and reached Olmütz by special train somewhere about six o'clock.

"The Minister was very kind and pleasant on the journey, not altogether in the best of spirits, as you may suppose, and sitting quietly buried in thought most of the time, but ready at any moment to quote a chorus from Sophocles in Greek like the good old Portenser,<sup>1</sup> he is. These choruses he considers the highest form of human poetry.

"I saw nothing of Olmütz, for on the 28th we drove from the railway station at six o'clock in the dark evening with outriders carrying torches, to the Archbishop's palace, and on the 29th we drove back to the station at eight in the evening. During the interval we did not put our heads out of doors, and hardly out of the window, from which there was no view save of an adjoining building. However, we were put up in magnificent style at the castle. The old Cardinal Archbishop, Freiherr von Sommerau-Beck, formerly an officer in a Uhlan regiment, received us on the staircase. He is eighty-one, and his face is very handsome under the red Cardinal's cap, which looks well against his splendid white hair. His goitre is hidden under a neckerchief. He is most kind with the manners of a dignified ecclesiastic.

"Prince Schwarzenberg with Freiherr von Meyendorff, the Russian Minister, had arrived that morning, contrary to expectation, and had been waiting for us all day, so that they had already dined, and a sumptuous dinner was served specially for us. Directly afterwards the Minister went to the Prince, and the rest of us, with the addition of an attaché from the Legation at Vienna, Count Lehdorff, a charming young man, whom I knew, waited impatiently for his return. Would it be war or peace? About an hour after midnight he came back with little hope, after which there was writing to be done till two. Up again at six, and writing till half-past eight, then another Conference between the two statesmen till one o'clock, resulting in a peaceful issue which I thought I might welcome with hope and confidence, notwithstanding several points of difficulty. At two o'clock dined with the Cardinal, when I made the acquaintance of Prince Schwarzenberg, of whom I need say no more than he is a folio edition of Kestner in the uniform of

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<sup>1</sup> Scholar of Schulpforta, near Kösen-Naumburg.



an Austrian General, he is his living image only in folio, and a *gentleman* through and through. I wish we had *him* for a Minister. I was also interested in meeting his companion, Hofrath Thierry, whose business it is to write upon all matters connected with the German question, so that I had already exchanged several hostile Notes with him. Meyendorff, the Russian, I had known for a long time.

"To my great delectation and the fearful annoyance of my companion, there was a Lenten dinner on Friday, of fish in all possible forms. We had coffee afterwards in the throne-room, in which, as a large Latin inscription informed us, the Emperor Ferdinand resigned the crown in November 1848, and young Franz Joseph took over the difficult task of consolidating the 'vacillantia Austriae fundamenta.' There was a little further conference, after which we left by special train at eight that evening, and reached Berlin by two o'clock on Saturday afternoon, having covered eighty-seven miles in eighteen hours, inclusive of an hour's wait at Breslau. The results of the Olmütz Conference have now been accepted by the King and the Ministry, so that I regard peace as assured, in spite of the violent opposition shown to-day in the Second Chamber."

*Continuation of Wednesday's Letter.*

"December 4, 1850.

"The Chambers were prorogued to-day by the King for a month, a false move in my opinion. He shows himself afraid of discussion. It would have been more manly to wait for a vote of want of confidence, or of opposition from the Chambers, and then to have dissolved them. Still, time has been gained and everything will be carried out peaceably and quietly. This might have been done equally well with the Chambers if the Ministers had but shown more courage."

JOURNAL.

December 5. The Olmütz "Articles" and my brief memoranda are to be submitted to the College of Princes.

With the Olmütz Conference all attempts at Union came to an end, as did likewise the defence of Hesse Cassel and the two Duchies. Although the pressure which Russia exercised both on Austria and Prussia had prevented a war, it had, at the same time, created conditions of peace which were deeply humiliating to the last mentioned power,

and hard times were in store for her and for Austria. More than ever apparent became the need of a strong armed force, so that Prussia, even though totally isolated, might secure her rights and defend her frontiers. Though indirectly instrumental in bringing about the "Articles," Abeken was none the less profoundly distressed by them, as is shown in the following fragment of a letter found among his papers.

*To Frau von Bunsen.*

"BERLIN, December 8, 1850.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I cannot let this day of sad recollection pass without saying at least a few words to you: it is a sort of hallowed remembrance to one, that early morning at the Porta Cavallegiere, with its star and its rainbow, and all that crowded upon my mind at that moment; and it does me good to think of it—it lifts me out of and above the present weary turmoil of life, and teaches me to look to something *beyond*, and strengthens the consciousness of something *within*, that cannot perish, when our best earthly hopes are crushed and destroyed. This is the case with almost all that I have laboured for during the last three years—the affairs of my country have come down to such a low state, that I think, for the present all aspirations to real freedom and national honour and power must be given up—to be renewed perhaps in God's own time, which probably we shall not live to see. There, do not I fall immediately again into politics—but who can help it? Politics in our days have a sacred meaning—they mean the struggle between liberty and despotism, civilisation and barbarism—not, as of old, between contending parties and petty interests of Cabinets and Ministers.

"I wished to have written to you on your birthday—but that day I spent far away from Berlin, at Olmütz, where I had accompanied the Minister, to try to preserve peace and prevent war. Well, war has been prevented, and I have had a greater share in pointing out the ways and means for that end, than I care to say or to have it known; I regret it, for what I meant for the best, has been carried out so as to prove an evil almost greater than war at the worst could have been. This is a sad experience—a very humiliating one; but if we accept it thankfully when God turns our evil to good, we must submit with resignation when the reverse takes place—and wait in faith and patience."

## CHAPTER IV

### CIRCULAR LETTER TO COUNTESS HAHN-HAHN— CHURCH AFFAIRS — DEATH OF RELATIONS— BECOMES COUNCILLOR OF LEGATION

1851-1855

“ War Christus tausendmal in Bethlehem geboren  
Und nicht in Dir ; Du bleibst noch ewiglich verloren.”

ANGELUS SILESII.

“ Schalfe, wenn die Sonne brennt,  
Wenn des Winters Stürme droh'n,  
Denn dein Tagewerk hat sein End',  
Gingest heim und nahmst den Lohn.”

THROUGHOUT the course of the next few years Abeken was less occupied with affairs of a political nature. Writing to his friend, Frau Schäfer, he says :—

“ Your last letter reached me just at the time when our last faint hopes of being able to do or to save something for the German and Prussian Fatherland had vanished. All our strivings and difficulties during a period of three stormy and disastrous years had been in vain, and the abasement of Prussia in the eyes of the world, as well as the policy of subterfuge and insincerity prevailing in her internal relations, were becoming daily more harshly, more glaringly, apparent. Just then I had but little to do, having been too much employed under the old regime to be able to work for the new. Neither did I feel much inclined for writing. Shortly afterwards I had the pleasure of being appointed to a somewhat different sphere of usefulness, being entrusted with correspondence of a more purely business and administrative character, instead of distinctly political work. This is, of course, rather tedious sometimes, but in no wise heart-rending, and I have a good deal of leisure as my mind is free. Besides this, my position outwardly speaking, is better and more assured, so that personally I have every reason to be satisfied. There was naturally a great deal to be done at first, for I was obliged to make myself acquainted with a comparatively new

field of work, and had to learn up all the business terms connected with it.

“ . . . There—I have told you so much about myself that I am almost ashamed. And it is not as though there were not plenty of other things to write about: the splendid monument of Friedrich II., for instance, and the grand day of the unveiling. *One* great man was there at any rate. I don't mean the one in bronze, but the artificer thereof, Rauch. I wish you could have seen him, good and venerable man, as he stood there, tall, grey-haired, and face of classic beauty, gazing moist-eyed at the work to which he had dedicated eleven years of his life, which must have looked like a new thing to him in its present magnificent surroundings. That such a day of honour should be granted to any man is surely a thing to thank God for. And with it all, Rauch has so humble and modest an opinion of himself.”

Abeken now found time to occupy himself once more with Church matters and to resume his studies. The first fruits of his newly acquired leisure was the pamphlet entitled *Babylon and Jerusalem*,<sup>1</sup> written in the form of a Circular Letter to Countess Hahn-Hahn,<sup>2</sup> who had gone over to Rome from the Evangelical communion without any conscientious examination of the Scriptures or consultation with her own Church. Abeken took this opportunity of re-stating his views on both Churches in a clear and open-minded manner, and the pamphlet aroused universal comment, was much discussed in the Press, and appeared in translations. In connection with it he received many letters, anonymous and otherwise. Ludwig Tieck,<sup>3</sup> having found out from the publisher the name of the author, expressed himself desirous of making the acquaintance of “this noble man,” adding: “It would be a great solace and interest to me in my lonely and suffering life to hold intercourse with so powerful a mind.”

The following extracts from letters to Frau Schäfer exhibit Abeken's views at this period.

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<sup>1</sup> *Babylon and Jerusalem*. Berlin, 1851. W. Hertz.

<sup>2</sup> Countess Ida von Hahn-Hahn, 1805–1880. Wrote *From Babylon to Jerusalem* and novels with a Romanist tendency.

<sup>3</sup> See page 12. In Berlin since 1841.



“BERLIN, *April 29, 1851.*

“I am glad you do not still think I have treated Countess Hahn with too much severity. I have, indeed, by many friends been accused of the reverse, but that I cannot admit. With her egotism and vanity there is mixed real honest endeavour, and for the sake of this, one can forgive her much. She may, perhaps, sometimes have indulged in the incense of self-blandishment and self-adoration, but she has never been slack and slothful, never really satisfied with herself, and after all, when one sees so much of the ordinary and paltry in the world, one can't help rather liking the extraordinary, even if it is very perverse. How many of those who have so blamed her, would have been any better, given *the same talents and the same temptations*?

“A certain man, Pilgram by name, in Bonn has published a rejoinder to my pamphlet, very keen and subtle, written in an appreciative way and profoundly intellectual. It, however, resolves the whole answer to the question into a matter of dialectic and logical difference in our modes of thought and apprehension. If we *thought* differently we should all become Roman Catholics. But conscience does not depend on thought; and it is *conscience* that makes men Protestants.”

“BERLIN, *May 5, 1851.*

“What you say about *Delphine*<sup>1</sup> as compared with the books of the present day is so true! People don't want to look at anything but external events, and the inner life of the heart bores them. At one time they fell into just the opposite error. This was in the second half of the last century, in the days of Werther and Siegwart, when they often entirely forgot the outside world and its duties, in order to sink into a state of morbid introspection. This was an extreme also, and a mistaken one, but I must say it was better than the extreme of the present day. If a man will only dig deep enough, he will always find *within himself* a need for, a yearning after God; in the world without, he will lose his bearings and make shipwreck, and drift a derelict at the mercy of wind and fog.”

In October 1852 Carlyle came to Berlin accompanied by Neuberg, and Abeken, who had made his acquaintance in London with Bunsen and other friends, spent much time in his company, assisting him in his literary and artistic investigations, and escorting him in various visits. He was

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<sup>1</sup> Novel by Baroness Stael-Holstein, the French writer, 1755-1817.

also able to procure several important books which Carlyle required when preparing for the publication of his work on Frederick the Great.

"Carlyle," says Abeken, "is one of the most remarkable men in the world. Having a strong love for what is true and genuine, he as often as not oversteps the mark, and, while purporting to tear off masks and trappings, brings with them pieces of living flesh. He is a strange man, such a curious mixture, with his deliberately prosaic realism on the one hand, and his poetic phantasy and idealism on the other. At one moment he will show the most striking penetration in discovering a truth, and at another time be quite incapable of grasping the simplest and plainest facts. Now he displays the calm perspicuity of a Goethe, and then a good slice of Jean Paul, madness and all. Sometimes a profound philosopher and a German, to boot, and again the most prosaic Englishman or rather Scot, poking fun at Kaulbach's grand mural paintings and saying he would rather have painted old Fritz's grenadiers on the walls of the Museum, while all the time he himself never writes history, but only the philosophy and poetry of history. He translates and adores Wilhelm Meister, the most perfect example of lucidity and simplicity of style, and his own style of writing is like that of Jean Paul."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, December 22, 1852.

"I must now tell you something about the Emperor of Austria's<sup>1</sup> visit. I saw him quite close this morning at the parade, and this evening at the gala performance at the opera. As to his outward man, the young Emperor impresses one favourably. He is reserved and dignified. It is almost pathetic to see him look old and serious beyond his years, and people who saw him two years ago, think him much altered in the time. It is no wonder. All those who have seen more of him are much pleased with his manner. Altogether he has left a good impression behind him, and I hope has taken a good one away, for although the actual Berliners were not at all enthusiastic, he had a cordial and friendly reception and due respect was paid him. I am very glad this visit has taken place. I did not, from the first, share in the wide-spread mistrust expressed by our Ministers, who imagined his coming would lead us to give

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<sup>1</sup> Franz Joseph, born 1830; became Emperor in 1848.

in on the vital question of the Tariff. As regards our political relations in general, and especially those with the West, this demonstration of close and friendly relations between the two great German powers is of much significance and importance, and it will not fail to make an impression in Paris and in the smaller Courts of Germany. In this union lies the best pledge of peace. I believe too that the Tariff question will be peacefully settled.

*To his Uncle Rudolf.*

“BERLIN, April 30, 1853.

“To-morrow I am going to the funeral of Ludwig Tieck, an old friend, I may almost call him, since my feelings for him as a poet and a man were those of friendship. The last few days he had been suffering severely from oppression on the chest, and difficulty in breathing, and the day before yesterday God called him to Himself. He would have been eighty on May 31. Between three and four weeks ago he had a sharp attack from which he never recovered, so that I did not see him during his last days. He is a great loss to me. With him disappears the last representative of those ‘goodly days of growth,’ as Niebuhr once called them. Old, ill and unproductive as he had become, there yet seemed to hover about his head a reflected glory of those earlier days, and not only that, but in heart and mind there was a breezy freshness, a living breath of spring-tide, such as is never found in any of the present generation. . . .

“Before long I hope to send you the lecture I gave on April 8.<sup>1</sup> It was very favourably received, notwithstanding sundry diatribes contained in it against certain tendencies in Berlin life, and errors in public worship.

“Our Fridays are a pleasant diversion to me. I had great trouble and difficulties in getting them up, but now all who have joined like them greatly. We have Wiese, Lepsius, Curtius, Gerhard, and Dr. Wattenbach, one of the Properzians, a Pro-Pertz is a collaborator on Pertz’s *Monumenta Germaniæ*.<sup>2</sup> We have read *The Frogs* of Aristophanes and are now reading the second (Egyptian) book of Herodotus, who has been fearfully misconstrued here and there by his interpreters, but contains grains of pure gold. When we have finished this we shall, I hope, take the *Agamemnon*.”

<sup>1</sup> *Public Worship in the Ancient Church*. A lecture. Berlin, W. Schultze, 1853.

<sup>2</sup> *Monumenta Germaniæ historica*, first published by the Gesellschaft für Deutschlands ältere Geschichtskunde, under the direction of Pertz.

*To Frau Schäfer.*

“BERLIN, *Morning of June 24, 1853.*

“I have just come back from the burial of a colleague, an elderly man, but hale and hearty up till five weeks ago, when he was afflicted with a grievous mental trouble from which death released him sooner than we had dared to hope. The memory of your solemn and beautiful words about death, came back to my mind with a living echo. . . .

“How strange it is that we can never really think of ourselves as dead. Is not this alone a pledge of life?

“The most solemn idea always to me about death, is that all those outer veils and integuments, which during this life have hid us from ourselves far more than from others, will fall away, and we shall stand before God just as we are, only the innermost heart of each man's personality remaining. ‘Blessed are the pure in heart,’ and who will not add: ‘Blessed are those who are purified of God’? That after death refining and progress still go on, I, too believe. The error in the Roman Catholic idea of purgatory is that it takes the place of *punishment*. But indeed, even on earth there is no *punishment* for the *believer*, only means of purification, correction and improvement. Punishment and penance are only for those who still feel themselves under the wrath of God. I thoroughly sympathize with you, too, about wishing to meet death with a perfectly clear consciousness. I would take leave of those I love, and would wish, if possible, that my last moments should give them an impression of love and confidence. This, it seems to me, is alone worthy of a man, and our old Church prayers were quite right in asking not only to be delivered from an evil death, but to be granted a *speedy* one.

“What a serious theme I have got upon, and very naturally. This spring has carried off more friends from my circle than I ever remember before.”

Abeken on his return from a short absence writes to his uncle Rudolf again as follows:—

“BERLIN, *October 2, 1853.*

“It is a great pleasure to me to have good, old Neukomm, the composer, here, whom I know through the Bunsens. He is seventy-five and a splendid old man. The only thing is, one has so little time for all the good people.



"The day before yesterday I was at the funeral of a man whom I much liked and respected, old Beuth,<sup>1</sup> to whom Prussia owes an immense deal in the matter of arts and crafts, and for having combined the two. He was seventy-three, and very vigorous mentally in spite of having been ill all summer. He was a fine specimen of humanity and possessed that all round cultivation which we hardly find now-a-days except in men of the last generation. Radowitz has been ill for a month, seriously ill. It is a bad year. I wish 1853 were over."

*To Frau von Bunsen.*

"BERLIN, January 10, 1854.

"Radowitz's<sup>2</sup> last days, like everything else connected with him, were beautiful. He had long been expecting to die, and awaited the end with the utmost composure, although those about him kept deceiving themselves with false hopes up to the last. His calm resignation was a support to every one, and Frau von Radowitz told me that, had it not been for the strength she derived from him, she could not have endured those days. It is impossible to picture anything more beautiful, more dignified, than his body in death. The closed eyes seemed to throw into relief the pure nobility of his features and the grandly moulded proportions of his magnificent head."

"BERLIN, January 23, 1854.

"What a strange turn of fate! Here is Manteuffel, at the moment of Radowitz's death, occupying the precise position the latter did, *against* the very same enemies, with whom he was formerly in collusion in turning Radowitz out!"

Hermann Abeken<sup>3</sup> fell ill of typhus fever in April 1854, and Abeken followed his uncle to Hanover to assist him in the care of his son. And to his charge the young wife and children were confided by his dying cousin, and he, therefore, remained in Hanover after his uncle had returned home,

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Christian Wilhelm Beuth, 1781-1853; Prussian statesman. Minister of Finance, founder of the School of Architecture in Berlin, patron of crafts and industries.

<sup>2</sup> He died December 25, 1853.

<sup>3</sup> A political and historical writer of some note.

so that he might help her in making ready to go to her father-in-law's house at Osnabrück.

Her mother-in-law died in the following January, her frail health giving way under the many trials she had so long endured. Hers was the fifth death in the family within ten months.

The event of moment to Abeken after all these domestic sorrows, was Bunsen's departure from England. Permission had been granted after some delay on the part of the King, who wished to give him leave of absence only. Bunsen settled at Heidelberg, thereby realizing "a long-cherished craving for the air of his Fatherland, and a desire for liberty and leisure to speak his mind freely."

*To Frau von Bunsen.*

"BERLIN, June 2, 1854.

"Just a line before you leave London. I feel quite sad at heart to think it is probably the last time I shall write to you by the Messenger, for the next one will hardly find you there. What memories are evoked! But this is no time for retrospection, rather, it behoves us to look ahead and shape the future in so far as it is given to me to do so. . . .

"But it makes my heart heavy, and so does Usedom's going. It is sad to see how the King is being parted from all his old friends either by distance or death. . . ."

Abeken was for a time engaged in the tuition of Prince Friedrich Wilhelm, afterwards the Emperor Friedrich, by whom he was in later years always most kindly received.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, February 7, 1854.

"The political world seems as uncertain as ever. A little good-will would bring about peace, but it is wanting on both sides. They cannot come to any decision in the Crimea,<sup>1</sup> most likely, until the spring, and there will not be peace till then. Germany might become a factor of puissant importance if the two great Teutonic powers would but trust each other! But I hope the result will be favourable to Germany. Nothing can shake my faith in Prussia and Germany."

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<sup>1</sup> Turkey had been at war with Russia since 1853, England and France having joined her by the treaty of March 12, 1854. The Crimean War was ended by the Peace of Paris, March 30, 1856.

Abeken delivered a lecture <sup>1</sup> in the spring, which won the approval of the King, and resulted in the lecturer being invited to Court several times. Of this he writes to his uncle Rudolf :

“BERLIN, *March 8, 1854.*

“So you saw the wonderful account of the King having sat through my lecture from beginning to end. He was most gracious, and that same evening he complimented me at a ball at the English Minister’s, and said he had much enjoyed it, and learnt much from it, and was thoroughly persuaded of the accuracy of my views. I may therefore apply to myself half of the beautiful verse in the *Westöstlichen Divan* :

“‘In thy dearly-loved one’s hearing  
Or before the Emp’ror’s throne,  
Whensoe’er thy name is spoken,  
It shall be with praise alone.’

“The poor King! he is in a most awkward predicament. May God grant him according to the prayer of the Church, a ‘wise heart, a kingly mind, a sound judgment, and a valiant spirit,’ and as for the stalwart arm, *that* will not be lacking if he will only make use of it.”

The lecture was the means of greatly advancing Abeken in the King’s confidence, who often assured him of his interest in these studies, saying he turned to them for solace and distraction even in the trying year 1848.

*Friedrich Wilhelm IV. to Abeken.*

“CHARLOTTENBURG, *March 8, 1855.*

“I return you, my dear Abeken, Brett’s work, and hope the copy I ordered through you from England will soon arrive. I felt my heart throb on reading the Prayer Book of Edward VI. It was like the realization of a sacred wish. I now ask you to set to work to draw up a similar one for the union and regeneration of our own Church. From Sunday till Wednesday I think of patching up my worries as best I may, by a rest at Potsdam. Should you be finished by then, I shall expect you at Potsdam on Tuesday morning at eleven o’clock, when you will find a room and lunch awaiting you. Vale, F.W.R.”

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<sup>1</sup> *The Religious Life of Islam.* A lecture delivered on February 27, 1854, at the Evangelical Union. Berlin, W. Schultze. 1854.

*To his Uncle, Rudolf Abeken.*

“BERLIN, *March 21, 1855.*

“I have been very busy with liturgical work lately in connection with my ancient Christian service, which has unexpectedly attracted the attention of the King. He has been asking me for all kinds of information, and I have had to rub up the results of my researches of long ago in order to stand the test of examination without disgracing myself. His Majesty has been very gracious and kind, and I have been twice commanded to dine. He has such a lovable and charming personality, that one's whole heart goes out to him when one is with him.”

Shortly afterwards, on April 4, 1855, Abeken was appointed Geheimerlegationsrath by Friedrich Wilhelm IV.

The following letter was addressed to Frau Schäfer during a short leave of absence in France :—

“TROUVILLE-SUR-MER, *August 8, 1855.*

“I have only a short leave, and the journey hither has taken me somewhat longer than was actually necessary, by the railway arrangements, as Paris was on my line of route, and not being acquainted with it, I felt I really must spend a few days there.

“Compared with the vastness of London, Paris struck me as small, and it does not impress me with that sense of lofty grandeur as does Rome, for example, or any one of the old cities of the Mediterranean and the Levant. Paris has, of course, its historic associations, but they are so new, and they are mingled with so much that is impure ; there has not been sufficient time to purge away their dross and reveal the essentially human element within. Paris is still too *modern* to appeal to the heart. It is, indeed, a *large* city rather than a *great* one, a big aggregate made up of many trifles, and the dimensions of everything are larger than the proportions ; whereas in the remains of antiquity in Rome, and all over Italy, Greece and Asia Minor, the very reverse is the case. There, the *proportions* are gigantic, and convey the impression of stupendous size, though the actual *dimensions* may be called small in comparison with our modern works. How *small*, for instance, is even the Coliseum in comparison with the Tuileries, Louvre and Versailles, and yet how infinitely *greater* than any one of them ! Still, Paris is tremendously interesting with its perpetual bustle and life, and I was delighted with the magnificent art treasures. Of course,



they look stranger here than they do in Italy ; one feels they are not at home in Paris somehow. On the other hand, one feels thoroughly at home oneself whenever one meets with what is artistic and beautiful, and can take a pure and unaffected delight in it."

The following letter to his Uncle Rudolf shows how Abeken's knowledge of foreign lands often stood him in good stead :—

"BERLIN, *November 15, 1855.*

"I had rather a comic scene on the evening of October 17, which properly speaking concerns you as you taught me my English. It was this : I had to play the part of interpreter between my Minister and Mr. Fillmore, the Ex-President of the United States of North America, a very intelligent and cultivated man of sound and impartial judgment, but understanding not a single word of anything save his own American tongue, while Herr von Manteuffel understands about as much of English as I do of Russian. (N.B. No political allusion intended.) I was, therefore, required to act as interpreter at a solemn interview, Mr. Fillmore having already been introduced to me elsewhere. It all went off all right, and I did not, at any rate, prevent the two gentlemen from taking a great fancy to one another, though a real *épanchement du cœur* is not possible through the medium of an interpreter.

"On the following Friday, Mr. Fillmore, accompanied by his kinsman, Mr. Corcoran, was invited to dine at Sanssouci. No interpreter was needed there, as both their Majesties speak very good English, but notwithstanding this, the King sent for me, wishing, as he said, to misuse my services in English conversation. It was a pleasant little dinner and Mr. Corcoran remarked afterwards that at the dinners given by Mr. Fillmore when he was President, everything was much more stiff and formal than here when dining with royalty. It was a unique experience to see the Republican, once possessed of greater power than many a king, sitting here in the black dress coat of an ordinary gentleman, face to face with the representative of an established monarchy, and one who is, moreover, so thorough a gentleman and man."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, *November 29, 1856.*

"To-day is the opening of the Chambers, or rather of the two Houses of the Landtag, in which those Princes who formerly ruled over states belonging to the Empire, are to take their

places for the first time, their very harmless privileges having been restored to them.

"I, too, am heartily delighted at peace<sup>1</sup> having been preserved for Prussia and Germany. The time has not yet arrived when, as 'Kladderadatsch' says, we shall be obliged to show to other countries what there is in Klopstock, the Italian actress, Ristori, having explained Schiller to us, and Philerète Chasles, the French littérateur, having demonstrated the meaning of Goethe in his lectures at the Singakademie. I was much interested in hearing these lectures, although, or rather *because* these lectures were so absolutely French—all for effect and full of witty elegancies. Still, in his way, he has made an honest and thorough study of the subject, and exhibits unusual appreciation and perception, not to say understanding, of the German mind."

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<sup>1</sup> Both Prussia and Austria had been in danger of becoming involved in the Crimean War.

## CHAPTER V

### EGYPTIAN LECTURE — CHURCH CONFERENCE IN BERLIN — THE KING'S ILLNESS — REGENCY OF THE PRINCE OF PRUSSIA — THE OLFERS AND YORCK FAMILIES

1856-1857

"Many have the words of truth, but not the truth of words."

"Of true religions there are but two: one that of the Divine, dwelling without form or shape within us and around; the other recognizing and adoring it under the fairest forms. All that lies between these is idolatry."—GOETHE. *Ethics*. V.

"When that last hour shall come,  
And from my breast shall call my spirit home,  
Say not of me: He died. Let all  
Who love me say: He waked from sleep,  
When, sudden through his slumbers deep,  
He heard an angel call."

IN 1856 Abeken reluctantly consented to deliver another lecture at the Evangelical Union, this time on the subject of the Egyptian Museum in Berlin.<sup>1</sup> Writing of it to his uncle, he says: "It was rather a queer idea to give a lecture upon a Museum; but the little pamphlet may be of use to visitors."

The lecture in substance had more connection with the objects of the "Union" than its title might lead one to suppose, Abeken's intention being to touch briefly upon various religious questions which, since his travels in Egypt, had lain very near his heart.

He writes to Frau von Bunsen:—

"Pray give a kindly reception to my little book, and don't dub it altogether heretical, even though it contains a view of the Exodus which is divergent from that of your dear husband. Wherefore has he given up his former, correct opinion for that

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<sup>1</sup> *The Egyptian Museum in Berlin*. A lecture. Berlin, W. Schultze, 1856.

of Lepsius, an incorrect one, according to my convictions? Naturally I have not been able to do more than just touch upon the subject, but I must really take it up thoroughly some day, unpleasant though it is to me to enter into a polemical disputation with Bunsen and Lepsius, the more so, as I am sure to get the worst of it in public against two such authorities. For I certainly can't call in orthodoxy to my aid."

*To Frau von Bunsen.*

"BERLIN, March 14, 1856.

"I have already made enemies to myself of certain people here by what I said in my lecture about the chronology of the Bible, though, out of consideration for the place where the lecture was held, I really spoke quite moderately. The worst ones immediately branded me as a heretic, while the more intelligent are of opinion that such things should not be said in public, which to me is a most pernicious idea. If our *educated* public can't and won't be induced to accept this view of the Bible, then all I can say is that it is a very bad look-out for the Bible, the Church, the public and the Christian community in general, and there will be nothing for it but a life and death struggle between the Bible and Science in which Church life must perish, no matter which side proves victorious."

*To Frau Schäfer.*

"BERLIN, June 14, 1856.

"When I think of my life here in Berlin, and the abundance of intellectual interests, I long to be able to share some of it all with you who get so little of it and would enjoy it so intensely. There are no end of people here who do not appreciate this intellectual life in the least, and many who only sip, as it were, the froth, just for pleasure, without deriving any lasting benefit or caring to improve their minds. And there are you, you who so eagerly welcome and assimilate every scrap of intellectual substance that comes your way, ordained by Heaven to live in so strangely different an atmosphere. One would imagine that the fulfilment of our mental needs was a right we were properly entitled to claim, but Providence, in this, as in other things, makes its own plans, and goes its own way, which is, in the long run, better than ours."

In September 1856 Abeken went for a few weeks' change to Heligoland.



*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“BERLIN, *October 25, 1856.*

“We have in prospect ‘an outburst of genius’ in the shape of the Church Conference<sup>1</sup> which is to open on the 3rd of next month at Monbijou. Several interesting and suggestive questions will be dealt with, but the outcome of it will be of very little profit. I am going to take part in the liturgical section, and have had to work up a résumé of my opinions for it, but I am thinking of opening my lips as little as possible. These matters are but little suited to verbal discussion.

“Altogether, I believe this Conference will rather hinder than promote the assembling of the General-Synod, to which it is supposed to be a preparatory step. Out of the five questions (*viz.* : the form and constitution of the Synod, parish regulations, the deacon’s office, marriage of divorced persons and the liturgy), the last, *i.e.* the liturgical question, arouses decidedly less public interest than the rest. In fact, it attracts attention almost solely on account of the formal questions as to the introduction of the liturgy, rights of the congregations with regard to it, and the relation between Holy Communion and Confession. On the last subject my views differ very considerably from the common run of opinions.”

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“BERLIN, *November 24, 1856.*

“Happily I was not called upon to take part in all the five questions which were laid before the Synod, but only in the liturgical one. . . .

“They are now upon the subject of the re-marriage of divorced persons, a very ticklish and difficult question, upon which most of them profess stricter principles than I deem to be practically necessary or feasible.

“The assembling of the Conference was looked at rather askance, owing to fear of the confessional element ; but I now hope it may have a good effect, since it has placed the question of the Union, one of such vital and paramount importance to the Church, on a proper footing. There will be croakings over

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<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm IV. had just convened a Conference at Berlin to consider the question of a General-Synod.

it in Hanover, where they are most rigidly Lutheran and confessional, just as there have already been in Mecklenburg.”<sup>1</sup>

*To his Uncle Rudolf.*

“BERLIN, May 1, 1857.

“Yesterday brought me a number of good things. At nine o'clock in the morning, I had to go to the Minister, this early hour being the only time when one can get any quiet conversation with him. I then went on to the Radziwills to offer my birthday congratulations to Countess Clary, a sister of the Princess's, and to see a charming little entertainment got up by the children in her honour. It was a truly delightful party and it was pretty to see the three generations of such an amiable and noble family all taking part in it together. There were the children who acted, their parents, and old Princess Clary their grandmother, a venerable matron distinguished for her intellectual culture and her qualities of mind and heart. After that I had work to do. Went back later to dinner with the Radziwills, and when I got home found the King had sent for me to go to tea at Charlottenburg. . . .”

The King was taken seriously ill at Pillnitz on July 14, but his condition soon mended and he was able to leave his bed. Schönlein<sup>2</sup> had feared a stroke, and said that though the danger was over, there was “still lightning playing about which might strike him any moment.”

In Abeken's journal under August 28, we read :—

“At two o'clock to Potsdam ; dined at Sanssouci, Ranke,<sup>3</sup> Kleist,<sup>4</sup> &c. After dinner, on the terrace ; talked on England. Then alone in the King's room. Conversation about the Liturgy and the Communion Service. Walked to the little Paradise Garden. Tea at Sanssouci. Back to Berlin at ten o'clock.”

*To his Uncle Rudolf.*

“BERLIN, August 31, 1857.

“I expect you will have shaken your head a good deal over Lewes's Biography.<sup>5</sup> He is not the man to tell us anything

<sup>1</sup> See *Evangelical Union* by J. Müller. Berlin, 1854.

<sup>2</sup> Johann Lucas Schönlein, 1793-1864. Professor of therapeutics and physician to the King.

<sup>3</sup> Leopold von Ranke, 1795-1886, historian.

<sup>4</sup> Hans Hugo von Kleist-Retzow, 1814-1892. A member of the Upper Chamber 1851-1858.

<sup>5</sup> George Henry Lewes. *Life and Work of Goethe*. London, 1855.

about Goethe; he is by far too vain and conceited. Any one who means to speak of Goethe ought to be as modest, or at any rate, as proud, as he is himself, but not conceited.

"On the 28th we had a Greek evening<sup>1</sup> at Lepsius' house. Ladies were invited this time and it was all beautifully arranged. We were to arrive early, first of all to read a little Greek and then, as we generally do on these occasions, we were to do homage to Goethe by reading aloud some favourite pieces, and new things relating to him. Well, my friends all sat there that evening waiting for me, and I—did not turn up. . . ."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, October 2, 1857.

" . . . The pleasant meeting with Bunsen and his son, George, was a great joy to me. I have known the latter ever since he was quite a small boy. He is now a married man with two children, and looks after a little property, Burg Rheindorf near Bonn. Both of them, together with Lepsius and his wife, had dinner with me yesterday, which was a special pleasure. His coming here took me quite by surprise, for he had not intended it. But the King, who has for him all the tender affection of an old friend, and who had not had any personal intercourse with him for a long while, sent him so pressing an invitation that there was no refusing it."

JOURNAL.

October 6. The King started for Sagan and Pillnitz this morning, but on the way in the carriage with the King of Saxony and the Emperor of Russia, who smokes very strong cigars, he became so ill that he returned to Potsdam. Feverish in the evening. The Minister, unaware of all this, had started meanwhile for the Lausitz in the morning.

October 7. The King in bed all day. Slept a great deal.

October 8. The King thought to be in a more critical state this morning. The Minister recalled. In the evening there was a violent rush of blood to the head which made them fear the worst.

October 10. Somewhat better reports from Potsdam.

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<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the Friday meetings of the "Greek Society," already mentioned on a preceding page.

*To Ignaz von Olfers.*<sup>1</sup>

“BERLIN, *Sunday, October 11, 1857.*

“You will doubtless have already received this morning’s bulletin which says: ‘Half past three. His Majesty the King had much quiet sleep during the night, but on waking felt very weak and tired. The symptoms of congestion are abating.’ But you may, perhaps, like to see the following intimation sent by the Minister-president but not intended for the press: ‘Eleven A.M. (it should be nine o’clock). His Majesty has had a quiet night. Ice compresses no longer required, his Majesty’s head cooler and no congestion of the brain. He is now enjoying what appears to be a healthy sleep.’ This sounds most encouraging. I have also heard that Schönlein said last night that he was now able for the first time to give some hope. May God still help him.”

## JOURNAL.

October 23. At Sanssouci. Deed signed for the transference of the Government to the Prince of Prussia.<sup>2</sup>

October 24. The deed of transference published in the *Staats-anzeiger*: Rescript by the Prince dated the 24th.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“BERLIN, *November 15, 1857.*

“During the earlier period of the King’s illness when you must have been longing for a word of news from me, I really hadn’t the heart to write. Somehow one could not talk about it, and yet one could talk of nothing else. In what state he now is, we don’t exactly know, certainly better in so far as his bodily health is concerned, but whether this improvement allows hope for a complete recovery of his mental powers no one can tell. We are anxiously awaiting a decisive report, wishing for it and yet fearing it. All one can do meanwhile, is to calm oneself with the reflection that all is in God’s hands.

“Ten days previously I had seen the King full of health and spirits, so that I would not believe in the symptoms of indisposition which were said to have preceded the attack, no matter

<sup>1</sup> Ignaz von Olfers, Wirklicher Geheimrath, Director General of the Royal Museums.

<sup>2</sup> The Prince of Prussia, afterwards King Wilhelm I., was at this time called upon to act as his brother’s representative, and later became Regent.



on what good authority they were reported. He was as charming as ever, and from things I have heard, he has not even now lost his fascination for those who have so far been allowed to see him, only a few persons, for he has to be kept absolutely quiet."

*To Frau Richard.*

"BERLIN, December 8, 1857.

"Our King's illness cast a heavy gloom over all good Prussians, and it weighed most heavily of all upon those who, like myself, had often had the good fortune of coming into close personal relations with him. It is the nature of the illness in itself which was, and alas, still is, so particularly painful. To think of that fertile mind, so richly endowed, so wide in its range, to think it should lose its energy, should become clouded and bedimmed! One would have been so much better able to bear it, had it been a mere bodily illness. No one who was not acquainted with him could have any notion of the fascination and charm of his personality, his kind-heartedness, his rich flow of thought and ideas.

"He has hitherto continued to make progress towards recovery, in so far that his mind has regained its clearness, if not its power and elasticity; but each excitement and exertion makes one dread a relapse, which would be certain to carry him off. If this is a sad thing in the case of anybody one loves, how much more so in that of a Prince, on the lightest motion of whose hand the weal and woe of so many people may often depend. It keeps us in a constant uneasy state of suspense, and we look forward apprehensively to the future."

Abeken spent Christmas at Osnabrück. Soon after his return to Berlin, he sustained a heavy loss in the death of Frau von Wildenbruch, the wife of his friend, and he refers to it as follows in a letter to his uncle:—

"If ever a wife and mother were needed by her family, it was she. God has called her away just at the time when her daughter was coming out and more than ever required a mother's advice and a mother's eye over her. As for the little boys, one can hardly think of them, left without maternal care. If ever a woman was made for this life, for its duties as well as its pleasures, she was that woman, and yet she has been called to an early death after a long preparation for heaven by a course of

painful suffering. God's ways are wonderful, and the ultimate end of all our speculations can only be to resign ourselves in faith and confidence to His eternal Love. Such a death-bed has an elevating influence. What a much more certain and beautiful pledge it is of eternal life and of the endurance of human fellowship after death, than are all silly manifestations of supposed spirits, &c. If we feel the nearness of the spirit-world it is not by means of a table, or wood, or a magnet, nor even by means of a medium of flesh and blood. It is in the depths of our inmost hearts that we feel it, in our best moments, when filled with the highest sentiments of love and devotion.

"We may long have thought of, and expected the moment of parting, may indeed, have wished it had come—but when it does come—! It is as when one watches the setting sun's descent to the horizon, and then, all at once, when it has quite set, behold! heaven and earth assume a totally different, and to me always, astonishing, appearance. Or, one sees a light, which is nearly extinct, flicker up and sink again. One knows it must cease to burn, but the moment of *darkness* is the first in which one realizes it is indeed burnt out."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, *January 21*, 1858.

"Constant love and faithful devotion, the communion of heart and mind, these are the only real and true bonds which can draw us near to our beloved dead and to the world beyond. All other attempts to approach them are an error, a profanation, one may say, a sin. No, let us stick to the old Christian belief, that in God we are united with our loved ones gone before, that they are now fully alive in spirit and in truth, and that the more we can realize this, the nearer we shall be to them. It is at the death-bed of those we love that the absurdity, the profanity, of all these performances comes doubly home to us. A death-bed, death, a dead person, they are such solemn and sacred things!"

*To Frau Richard.*

"BERLIN, *February 11*, 1858.

"You will have seen in the newspapers what festivities there have been in Berlin,<sup>1</sup> and there are crowds of fêtes still going on to which the evenings are given up and every one is

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<sup>1</sup> On the entry of Prince Friedrich Wilhelm and his bride, Princess Victoria, the Princess Royal of England.

so over-tired in the morning that hardly any business is done. If you are interested in descriptions you will find plenty of them in the papers, but I may add that none of the Press accounts can give any adequate idea of the hearty sympathy, the really intense feeling shown by the entire population. This feeling and sympathy were the more increased by the thought, which none can avoid, of the sad cloud cast by the King's illness over the Royal House, and through it over the whole country.

"One cannot regard the young Princess without emotion. She looks so young, such a child, as if she had only just come out of her English nursery. And to be already placed in so exalted a position, under the scrutiny of a thousand eyes, while her own, (which, by the way, are very beautiful ones), are still looking out upon life with that fresh and naïve artlessness! Grave and difficult, indeed, are the duties which fall to the lot of the Princes and great ones of the earth. And they find their support and consolation after all, only in the simplest feelings of love and faith, which they share with every beggar. Thank God that these human feelings have always existed in our Royal Family, and I hope will ever continue."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“BERLIN, May 4, 1858.

"Yesterday at a party (at which was present amongst others, Tieck's nephew, Bernhardi,<sup>1</sup> the editor of the Memoirs of the Russian General Toll), conversation again turned upon that silly, old saying, that it would have been better for Goethe to have lived in a large civic community like Frankfort or Hamburg, instead of in Weimar. What a foolish remark it is. Had this been the case, he would have been restricted to a purely literary career, and in such a life even Goethe would have come to grief. What he needed was work, work of an active kind, full of fresh interests, and offering an immediate scope for his energies. And this he could only find in a position such as the one he held, in a small country, not governed from a distance by the ministerial officialdom of a board of green cloth, but under the close supervision of a ruler who could exercise his control at any moment, a country, in short, which derived all its advantages from the presence of its ruler. . . . Goethe's vocation was not that of a litterateur, nor an official of a great State; he was just a steward of a small country which

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<sup>1</sup> Theodor von Bernhardi, 1792-1887. Historian and diplomatist.

really is no more than a large landed property. There he was able to *live* and *work*, and it was precisely because his writing was only a *by-product* that it was perfect. He was thus preserved from an exuberance of production, and still worse of publishing, and this is a great thing."

After a short absence during which he visited Heidelberg, Munich and Nürnberg, and went to see Count Yorck<sup>1</sup> at his country place in Silesia, Abeken writes to his uncle as follows :—

"BERLIN, *Evening of October 5, 1858.*

"Within a short time we shall be called upon to decide definitely as to the exact form of government to be adopted for the country. That this is necessary is recognized by everybody; the only question is *how* it is to be done. It would be easy enough were it merely a matter of the thing in itself, and were not so many unnecessary considerations, and secondary, personal aims mixed up with it all.

"As to the Prince himself, his action is embarrassed by the highest and most delicate motives. One thing anyhow is certain, and that is that absolute independence *must* be secured to the Regent. Let this once be attained, and the actual form which the Government assumes will be a question of relatively small importance, if not one of indifference. Probably the highest authorities themselves have not yet come to any decision in the matter, and great secrecy is maintained with regard to it."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, *October 27, 1858.*

"At the beginning of the month, when I got back here after my trip, I found the arrangements about the Regency still undetermined, though there was reason to hope that the Prince's resolution and loyalty would make him cling to his own rights while observing those of the King and country. Much uneasiness therefore, and doubtless in the King's entourage, much

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<sup>1</sup> Hans David Ludwig Yorck von Wartenburg, son of the Field-Marshal, the only one of his eleven children who survived him. Abeken had made Count Yorck's acquaintance soon after returning from Italy, being much attracted by his intellectual attainments and his sterling character. Different as the two men appeared to be in various respects, they struck up a firm friendship on the strength of many common interests and aspirations.



contention, was aroused, when there was found to be a desire on many sides for an indefinite prolongation of the system of government by deputy, instead of an actual regency. As, however, this was recognized to be an impossibility, it was then suggested to install the Regent merely as a royal plenipotentiary, without any regard to the Constitution or to the constitutional co-operation of the States.

"Even after the matter had received the highest sanction, and the King had signed the decree of October 7, (which he did with the greatest resolution, but was found shortly afterwards with his face in his hands, weeping bitterly, and who would not feel with him) ? even then, there was a moment of suspense. This was when the Landtag assembled, as a not inconsiderable party among the States themselves questioned their own power to co-operate, and discussion and discord threatened to compromise the whole position of Prussia, at a moment when there was every need of unanimity. Once again, however, Prussia extricated herself from her hour of trial, and the right conclusion was unanimously arrived at. The most extreme and refractory elements withdrew their opposition, and, without any discussion or contest, a resolution was passed with one accord, recognizing the necessity for a regency and sanctioning the action of the Prince-Regent. . . . Thus a regency, which, under other conditions and in other countries, is apt to be an element of weakness, has, in our case, become a new element of strength, thanks to the unanimous support of the people and to the unambitious loyalty and unselfishness of the Regent himself.

"I was present on Monday at the brief but most memorable sitting of the two Chambers. In the course of this short sitting there were three sublime moments. Never shall I forget them. The first was after the report of the Commission had been read out. When the President said: 'I now open the debate,' there was a pause of breathless expectation, no one being sure until the last minute, whether some indiscreet words might not be uttered, which would give rise to no end of baneful and futile argument. This silence lasted until the President went on to say: 'No one having announced his intention of speaking, I close the debate.' The Commission then moved that the necessity be recognized for a Regency in accordance with the royal decree, when an overwhelming impression was made by the simultaneous rising of the entire assembly, all the five hundred and twenty-five persons standing up as one man. Even the President's voice trembled as he said: 'The motion is carried unanimously.' Last of all came an enthusiastic 'Lebehoch'

for the King and the Prince Regent, the first time they had been accorded a joint ovation. The cheering, which was taken up by the Assembly and by the large numbers of the public who were present, was led off by the President. The latter had previously made a fine speech, declaring that the blessing of the late King, the father of these two brothers, of the Royal House and of the country, would rest upon that day."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, *March 2*, 1859.

"Our young Prince<sup>1</sup> is to receive his name the day after to-morrow, Friedrich is the calendar name for that day.<sup>2</sup> So he may almost be called a child of the spring, though he was born in January. Let us trust that the fair spring hopes which are linked with his name may be fulfilled, or his first year may turn out a very stormy one. However, no one can foresee what the summer may bring. I should hardly suppose that things will remain quiet in Italy; but I do hope that Prussia and Germany won't allow themselves to be drawn into a war about Italy,<sup>3</sup> despite the bellicose sentiments of your Chambers, as well as of some in South Germany. Louis Napoleon will be very wary of attacking Germany. Poor Italy, with her fatal 'don della bellezza!' France has never done her any good and won't do her any now. But that does not excuse or justify the systematic tyranny practised by Austria, who, while not governing so badly in her own country, purposely took good care that Italy should be governed worse and worse. You would like Austria and Prussia to stand loyally by one another as brothers. Well, no one can wish it more than I do, only the brotherly feeling must be on both sides.

"Our political leaders have a serious and difficult task before them just now; it is to be hoped they won't allow themselves to be swayed by any petty considerations and crotchets, nor by any sudden wave of excitement or sentiment. I am very glad to see that the *popular* feeling in Germany is expressing itself so decidedly against France. But the Governments must not on this account let themselves be urged into taking any rash steps. The Hanoverian Chambers any way have somewhat overstepped the mark.

<sup>1</sup> The present Kaiser, Wilhelm II. Born January 27, 1859.

<sup>2</sup> Friedrich is not the calendar name "for the day after to-morrow," *i.e.* for March 4, but for March 5.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Beginning of the war between France, Sardinia and Austria.

“ And now to tell you of the rejoicings about our little Prince. Of course they were half political, but there was still more of the human element mixed up in them. Really, it was a grand day! I had to leave the Foreign Office earlier than usual as Lepsius and Count Yorck’s son happened to be dining with me, so that all the news I could bring away with me was that the great event was momentarily expected. It was a half hour of really breathless suspense. I did not say anything to my guests, but brought a bottle of champagne with me. Then to their astonishment the firing began. We counted breathlessly till over forty reports, (thirty-six for a Princess, seventy-two for a Prince), and then joined in the cheering, the sound of which came up to us from the street. The grandfather, the Prince Regent of Prussia, had just got to the Foreign Office, whither he had gone on foot, when the news was brought to him, the event had not been expected till an hour or two later. He jumped into a droschke and drove to the Palace like a good citizen, much to the delight of his fellow Berliners. There happened to be a sitting of the Academy to commemorate the anniversary of Friedrich II.’s<sup>1</sup> birthday, which fell a few days previously. It was nice to be able to open proceedings by announcing the joyful intelligence to the audience, many of whom had not yet heard it. Illuminations were improvised that evening, and there will be a brilliant repetition of them for the christening, the day after to-morrow.

“ The universal interest which has been shown was exceedingly gratifying. It was like a family fête for the whole town, and the whole country. By a fortunate coincidence, the Prince-Regent was holding the first large Court of the year that same evening, and he looked very happy receiving congratulations in the capacity of grandfather, as did Prince Friedrich Wilhelm in that of father!”

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

‘ BERLIN, *March 4*, 1859.

“ I have just been reading your letter and am glad you like Hermann Grimm’s<sup>2</sup> Essays; but I am rather surprised at your questions concerning him. Have I never told you that he is the son of Wilhelm, one of the Grimm brothers? Yes, to be

<sup>1</sup> January 24, 1712.

<sup>2</sup> Hermann Grimm, born January 6, 1828, Professor History of Art in Berlin since 1872. He married Gisela von Arnim, a daughter of Bettina von Arnim.

sure, he lives in Berlin and belongs to the society of which I see the most. He is about thirty years old, long and lean, with a very remarkable face, rather hollow cheeks, black hair and a brown beard. He has a humorous, often a somewhat sarcastic manner, but his character is a noble one through and through, far and away above all comparison with our wretched set of young literary men ; he belongs to another order of things altogether. He was like a child of the house at Bettina von Arnim's, but her death has now brought that to an end.<sup>1</sup> At the present moment he is engaged on a great work upon 'Michael Angelo and his Times,'<sup>2</sup> and he has published quite an excellent little brochure on academies of art. I quite agree with you that his talent as a critic is not alone of the critical order : it has just as much the nature of positive opinion. How vivid and acute is his delineation of character, and how naturally his thoughts flow. Of course he has his fads, as is shown in his exaggerated estimate of Emerson the American, who stands on a far lower level than he does himself. But he has no small poetic talent.

"You ask about the Radziwills. There are two brothers, Prince Wilhelm and Prince Boguslav, sons of the famous Prince Anton Radziwill, whom you have seen walking arm-in-arm with Humboldt, and whose great genius, especially in the musical line,<sup>3</sup> made his house a centre for all the best intellectual life in Berlin. The mother was that delightful Princess Luise,<sup>4</sup> who is mentioned, you will remember in Pertz's *Stein*.<sup>5</sup> The father's genius has not descended to the sons, but they have inherited their mother's beautiful mind. Boguslav, the younger, has a great deal of wit and humour. They married two sisters of the Austrian Clary family, whose mother, old Princess Clary, daughter or granddaughter of Prince de Ligne, the celebrated wit, is still alive, and is in Berlin now, spending the winter, as usual, with her daughters. She is a most distinguished and charming woman, and extremely active-minded, despite her eighty years. I often go there in the evening, and at family gatherings they are pleased to count me among their intimate friends."

<sup>1</sup> She died January 20, 1859.

<sup>2</sup> The first edition appeared in 1898.

<sup>3</sup> Prince Anton Radziwill, 1755-1833. Statthalter of Posen, 1815. His sons were Wilhelm and Boguslav.

<sup>4</sup> Princess Luise Friedericke of Prussia, niece of Friedrich II.

<sup>5</sup> G. H. Pertz, *Life of Stein* the Minister, Freiherr von Stein, six vols. 1844-1854.



*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*"BERLIN, *End of May*, 1859.

"I was sure Humboldt's<sup>1</sup> death would upset you. His is the last great name of a great period, a period with which I rejoice to be connected, at least by the roots. It was our *classic* period. Classic is a big word, though in our days it has lost much of its meaning. If one could only think that the *piety* which Uncle Ludwig once contrasted with it had taken its place! Humboldt's loss will be very widely felt. There is no one left of the highest standing to represent the interests and advancement of science and to lend them the double weight of his own understanding and recognised authority. Universal regret was shown at his funeral, which was a fine and dignified function. I was there, of course, and walked in the procession in uniform. He did not look disfigured, but greatly altered. . . ."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*"BERLIN, *July 21*, 1859.

"This unexpected news of peace,<sup>2</sup> for by me it was certainly not expected so soon, has at least confirmed my prediction that we should not go to war unless we were wantonly to bring it on ourselves. Both Austria and Germany wanted us to do this. Thank God we have not let ourselves be inveigled into it. Austria did not think it worth while devoting her last man and her last florin, though the latter is probably spent already, to the defence of her territorial integrity, of her so-called ascendancy in Italy, and of the inviolability of the Treaty of 1815, which she herself has broken often enough already. During the actual course of the peace negotiations Prince Windischgrätz<sup>3</sup> declared here, that the Emperor would resist till the last man, and the Austrian Ambassador asserted that the re-establishment of the *status quo ante* would be merely making a rotten peace which Austria would never put up with. I said directly, at the time, yes! he would resist till the last Prussian, not till the last Austrian!"

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<sup>1</sup> He died May 6, 1859.

<sup>2</sup> The intended conclusion of the preliminaries of peace between Franz Joseph and Louis Napoleon, at Villafranca on June 11, 1859, which led to the Peace of Zürich which was not favourable to the unity of Italy.

<sup>3</sup> Alfred, Prince Windischgrätz, 1787-1862, Austrian Field-Marshal.

*To Frau Richard.*

“BERLIN, August 6, 1859.

“I am quite concerned as to the future of my poor, dear Italy. It is idle and foolish to talk as though the Italians were incapable of forming a decent political community. They are not a bit less knowing about politics, perhaps more so, than the Germans and the French, only they are never allowed to show their capabilities, nor to develop on independent lines. Situated midway between two larger and, therefore, mightier powers, they naturally have become the plaything of both, and I fear that this may long continue to be the case, and that the accretion of territory to Sardinia is of so insufficient and unprotected a nature as to be to her an element rather of weakness than of strength. But I don't want to enter into politics, so I will only assure you that I have a cordial liking for the Italians, have great confidence in them, and do not give up hope that better days are in store for Italy, after what, at present, seems a time of anarchy and confusion.”

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“September 3, 1859.

“I have suddenly been ordered away for a short time to the sea, and as the prescriber of the journey is likewise paying the expenses of it, I could not well refuse to go. It would, in fact, have been impossible, since the journey has been prescribed, not by a physician, but by my chief, the Minister, who has been sent for to Ostend by the Prince Regent, and was good enough to wish me to accompany him and help him in his work.”

After this brief absence, Abeken returned to Berlin, where his social duties brought him into touch with three families in particular: the Radziwills at their palace in Wilhelm strasse, the Olfers and Yorck families, and that of Lepsius, who had a charming house built by the professor himself, and surrounded by a beautiful garden. By all Abeken was a beloved and trusted friend. His constant services and presence at the Radziwill palace are frequently alluded to in correspondence, while to Lepsius and his household he was helpful on many occasions both of joy and sorrow. His Sundays were often spent with him and his family, playing games with the merry circle of children, or engaged in conversation with their elders.

The homes of the families of Olfers and Yorck were equally social centres. They lived in Cantian strasse, on what was known in those days, as the Museum Island. Olfers, as Director General of the Museums of the town, had, at the desire of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV., undertaken the task of introducing into Berlin society all distinguished foreigners, artists and savants. He was indefatigable in his hospitality. The rooms of his large house were adorned solely with works of art. In the first room there was a fine collection of plaster-casts shown off to advantage by dark red paper, and the oak furniture was artistically carved. In the centre was a map stand on which at the soirées the artists would exhibit the art treasures they had brought with them from their recent travels. Then there was the yellow drawing-room, a spacious apartment, also adorned with sculptures, its curious shape admirably adapted to the needs of the various groups of talkers, who eagerly availed themselves of the many comfortable nooks and corners for conversation, one of the daughters of the house, meanwhile pouring out tea for the whole company at a large table in the middle of the room. On quiet evenings Grimm sometimes gave readings from his works, and later on he read aloud his *Frau Gisela*, while many years later in a corner of this room a little audience, among whom was Abeken, listened in rapt attention to the early works of Ernst von Wildenbruch.<sup>1</sup> When Abeken liked any one he was unsparing in his criticism; but he was never cold, and in pronouncing a judgment ever displayed a warm-heartedness and kindly feeling. One can but regret he did not live to see the brilliant after career of his young poet friend.

It would be impossible to name all the habitués of the three houses above mentioned, comprising, as they did, the whole intellectual society of Berlin, and including many interesting foreign elements. All three families were musical, but they were chiefly absorbed in art and literature, in intellectual studies and aspirations after the ideal life. In conversation they attempted to discuss exhaustively the profoundest of speculations, the highest problems and merely personal topics were seldom alluded to. In addition

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<sup>1</sup> Son of Abeken's friend, already mentioned. Born 1845.

to their large circle of acquaintance in the artistic and literary world, the three families of Olfers, Radziwill and Lepsius were on intimate terms of friendship with one another. Berlin in those days had not become a capital city, and was not dominated exclusively by political considerations.

The winter was marked by preparations for the Schiller celebrations. Rudolf Abeken writing to his nephew on September 23 from Osnabrück, says :—

“ I believe I told you that Palleske<sup>1</sup> had written to me a few months ago asking for the dates of the notes made by my wife.<sup>2</sup> Palleske has not published anything out of the journal. I wrote and told him the reason why I had sent it to Goethe. It was because the latter had remarked when we were sitting with him on July 5: ‘ I never heard an idle word fall from Schiller’s lips.’ I think this remark deserved a place in the biography.

“ I am sorry my wife did not write down more about Schiller. I recall one thing. When he was working at his plays he would frequently beg her to play on the piano, which stood in the next room, and often called out: ‘ A march! Christal, a march!’ Isn’t this characteristic of the grand language in which Schiller makes so many of his people speak? Music, one knows will awaken a mood or will stimulate and accompany it.

“ There are some inaccuracies in the Biography, which I could easily rectify had I still any desire for reviewing; but it has come out exactly at the right time and will give an impetus to the fête on November 10. I am so glad Emilie is alive to see it. It is most pleasing to think of Schiller’s child taking part in the celebrations. I consider Goethe’s affection for Schiller the finest thing the latter could have experienced, and his greatest triumph. How profound, how splendid, is Goethe’s elegy upon him! I think it more so every time I read or recall it!”

*From his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“ OSNABRÜCK, September 24, 1859.

“ I have just read in the *Weser-Zeitung* a review of Palleske’s book, which though appreciative and laudatory, describes it

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<sup>1</sup> Emil Palleske. Editor of Schiller’s Life and Works. Berlin, 1858–1859.

<sup>2</sup> Who had lived in Schiller’s house.



in the same terms and gives it the same name I did, calling it a piece of advocacy. I agree with the reviewer. This sort of thing was not needed for Schiller. When he says of himself in one of his letters to Körner, that he is but a beggarly wretch compared to Goethe, that of course, is false modesty and not true. But Palleske goes much too far the other way and is just as untrue on his side. Let us take Schiller as he is. He is quite great enough and lovable enough to cause all hearts to beat for him, and they are sure to do so on November 10."

## CHAPTER VI

### BUNSEN'S DEATH—DEATH OF FRIEDRICH WILHELM IV—CORONATION OF KING WILHELM I

1860-1861

"I may sum up the emotions awakened by the beginning of this year in a double quotation from Goethe:

"'Though the starry veil and enshrouded mists of evening may hide the future from our gaze'—'Yet Thy messengers are they, O Lord, and hail the silent coming of Thy day!'"—*Abeken to Frau von Bunsen*.

"Pregar, pregar, pregar-che altro ponno I miseri Mortal."

IN the middle of May 1860, Abeken accompanied by Lepsius and Wiese, went to Osnabrück for his uncle's jubilee, having written a congratulatory address for the occasion.<sup>1</sup> Before leaving, he conducted his companions about the town taking them to see his old home, and the Hasegarten at the town-gate. They were delighted, he says, with the old house, "full of nooks and corners, and with no two rooms on the same level," and he speaks of the unexpected impression made on his friends by "the old-world atmosphere of Osnabrück and the excellence of its people."

On his return to Berlin he writes as follows to his uncle:

"God bless you for all the affection you have lavished upon me. It has kept the old home alive for me, and whenever I return it is as though the peaceful atmosphere of my childhood pervaded the place. God grant that you may long be its central figure, the high priest of that hearth and home, diffusing blessing and happiness on those about you, and may you long enjoy a like measure of blessing yourself."

At the end of June Abeken joined the Foreign Minister at Baden where a meeting had been arranged between the Emperor Louis Napoleon and the Prince Regent of Prussia.

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"The tragic solution in the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles, being a congratulatory address to Dr. Abeken on the completion of the fiftieth year of his professorship, May 14, 1860," by H. Abeken. Berlin, Hertz. 1860.

Previous to his departure he had spent an evening with the Hermann Grimms and heard Joachim play selections from Bach and Beethoven accompanied by Marie von Olfers, a daughter of Ignaz von Olfers.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“BADEN-BADEN, *June 2, 1860.*

“None of the Ministerial world were supposed to be here during the Emperor’s visit, for it was desirable to avoid all semblance of political transactions, and to give the interview an entirely personal character. Of course every one was full of it, and one hears of nothing but Louis Napoleon and the Prince Regent. Everything appears to have gone off very well, and I think the Emperor has carried away with him a proper impression of Germany. It is very striking to note the great popularity of the Prince Regent with everybody. It was he who was treated as the chief personage here. The main point is, that an impression has been given both at home and abroad, of Germany’s unity, and of her unanimity as regards her foreign policy. The Prince and Princess went to-day to make a short stay with the Empress of Russia.”

*To Frau von Bunsen.*

“BADEN-BADEN, *June 21, 1860.*

“The Prince Regent acted with great tact and decision in every respect ; he has shown no weakness or vacillation anywhere. As to any positive result of all these important State proceedings which required so much machinery to set going, one can, of course, say nothing ; but the *negative* result is by no means small. The Emperor can hardly have failed to have been impressed by the fact that the Prince Regent of Prussia is actually at the head of Germany, and that he would have the whole of Germany behind him in the event of attack. The Prince carried off the honours of the day, and this, quite unintentionally and without effort, merely by his candour and open simplicity of manner. He became, as a matter of course, the chief person, and the other German princes realized this. They recognized too, that as all their efforts to deter him from the course he had adopted, had been in vain, so any attempts they might make in the future were doomed to failure. The allocution he addressed to them on the 18th, which was, as it were, a speech from the throne, to the German Upper House, opened their eyes in the matter, and is, in my opinion, of the

greatest importance, declaring, as it does, his firm intention of persisting in the course he has already adopted. The general feeling here is that the time at Baden has been one of triumph for the Prince of Prussia, that is, for him *personally*, as well as for Prussia. Every one is fully convinced of this, and the Emperor, though he knew the Prince, was very much impressed by his simple, natural manner, and has said so in Paris.

"So that, much as I dreaded it at first, I am satisfied with the upshot of this interview, and believe it will serve to strengthen and encourage us in the course on which we are embarked, and which, though sure in the end, must of necessity be a long and tedious one. Germany must fall to us like a ripe fruit, and she will do so at the next European crisis. All we have to do is to hold on and strengthen our home forces.

"The military reforms which are causing us so much anxiety at home, have, to my astonishment, produced an extraordinary effect abroad, and instead of injuring us, they impress the foreigners."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BADEN, July 1, 1860.

"I was highly amused by the encounter of Borries<sup>1</sup> and Stüve. It struck other people too. I only hope they didn't meet one another with too much anti-Prussian feeling! If only Stüve could have walked up and down the promenade for half-an-hour yesterday morning, as I did, with the Prince, and could have heard all the golden words he said to me about German policy, and Prussian administration, he would have rather more confidence in us.

"Our sojourn here is coming to an end, for the Minister thinks of leaving the day after to-morrow, and I leave with him. I hope, however, to go down the Rhine as far as Bonn to spend a couple of days with Bunsen. He is, alas, in such a bad state of health that I feel I must not miss this opportunity of seeing him now I am so near him."

Abeken's further plans for the summer were to accompany the Prince and the Minister of Foreign Affairs to Ostend, and in October to spend a few days at Klein-Oels to attend the wedding of young Count Yorck to Wildenbruch's daughter.

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<sup>1</sup> F. W. Otto Count von Borries, 1802-1883. From 1855-1862 Minister of the Interior in Hanover. Head of the Reactionary party.



*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.**"OSTEND, August 19, 1860.*

"My work here has been of a particularly interesting character, so that I have every reason to be satisfied as far as that is concerned. The only thing is that all our efforts appear to me so ludicrous in view of the headlong rush of events, and make it impossible to depend upon anything. The course of the world's history at the present time is like the surging advance of a great, roaring sea at high tide. Of course the ebb is sure to come, but in the history of the world one can't predict with such certainty, as in the case of the sea, the exact moment the tide will turn. Of this much, however, we are certain, that there dwells in heaven One who in His good time will say to every sea, moral and physical alike: 'Hither shalt thou come, but no further.' And we have every cause for confidence, we Prussians and Germans, if only we will act rationally. As for the petty principalities in Italy which are being engulfed by the tide, I have no sympathy with, nor pity for, them whatever. I hope and trust that some vital, animate principle will in time be evolved from this ferment of elements. But we must not be impatient if things do not come right all at once.

"About your MS.<sup>1</sup> I won't say anything yet, having only read—and with great pleasure—one hundred pages of it. To my mind there is something thoroughly congenial in this human point of view, though probably the general public won't think it piquant enough nor written with sufficient purpose. What a joy it is to watch him maturing, and, as it were, to grow oneself with his growth! I often dip into Hermann Grimm's new book on Michael Angelo, which has also much delighted me. Here, too, is represented the growth of a genius, and one enjoys the historical presentment of the author's own creative and poetic mind. He reveals his own individuality in so agreeable a manner, and the whole work is pervaded by an atmosphere of life and sprightliness totally lacking in our young writers. His point of view, too, is so genial, so directly intuitive, no laborious mosaic-work about it, and yet one feels how profoundly he has studied his subject."

On October 15, 1860, the University of Berlin celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Boeckh, whose appointment there dated from 1811, delivered an excellent address at

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<sup>1</sup> *Goethe from 1771-1775*, by B. Rudolf Abeken. Hanover, C. Rümpler, 1861. In a letter to Marie von Olfers at Klein-Oels, Abeken makes similar remarks upon this work.

S. Nicholas Church to a large gathering of noted scholars, German and foreign. Abeken writes :—

“ The Prince Regent, the heir to the throne, in fact, nearly all the princes were there. Any one who has ever known the King must have felt the keenest sorrow that he too was not present, a sorrow to which Boeckh made very fine allusion in his speech. Referring to the King's virtues, he paid a special tribute to that cheerfulness of spirit which once was his, saying that of old it was considered such an important attribute of those set in high places and entrusted with great concerns in this life, that from it, was borrowed one of the oldest and loftiest of the titles of majesty, *serenissimus princeps*.”

Another occasion of great interest to Abeken was his uncle's eightieth birthday, which fell in November of that year. He writes to congratulate him as follows :—

“ BERLIN, *November 28, 1860.*

“ Old Goethe would beam with satisfaction upon his youthful old friend to-day. ‘ Yes,’ he would say, ‘ he also has understood the art of living ; it requires something to keep oneself going for eighty years ; it isn't everybody can manage it ! ’ You have, indeed, learnt something from that great master Goethe, more than the philosophers with all their wisdom. But something more even than this you have learnt in the 90th Psalm from that other far greater master, namely Moses, and that is how to keep at bay the three old wives by whom Faust was so sore beset. You have not destroyed the hut of any Philemon and Baucis and rebuilt it to promote your private ends. Your work has only been to sow, to plant, and to cultivate the soil. I verily believe, dear uncle, that you have done no harm to any one in all your eighty years, and that there is no one to-day who could accuse you of having caused him one single moment of pain. This is one of the mercies of God, from whom we derive not only all we *have* but all we *are*.”

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“ BERLIN, *November 29, 1860.*

“ If our leading men only had rather more energy and courage in addition to their good intentions !

“ One great personality has now departed from amongst us, who had no lack of valour and energy as well as a broad mind. Bunsen died yesterday morning. For him it is a release from

severe suffering, but for us, for so many, indeed, for the world at large, it is a heavy loss. I am still too much distressed to be able to write of it more fully in a birthday letter. His was a *magna et nobilis anima*, and genuine piety and affectionate sincerity, the keynotes of his character."

Another loss was that of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, January 16, 1860.

"The coldest day was that of the King's funeral,<sup>1</sup> eighteen degrees the night before, and even by the afternoon there were still fourteen degrees. We waited in the picture gallery at Sans Souci for the procession to start. The weather was favourable, calm with bright sunshine. It was an impressive sight, that of the long solemn procession winding along over the white snow-shrouded fields and beneath the rime-covered branches of the old trees. It did not go into the town at all.

"The function at the Friedenskirche was very beautiful and solemn though short, only prayers, a hymn and a portion of Scripture: no sermon, Strauss having already preached one at the Schloss, the family and the very highest alone being admitted. I had, however, seen the corpse on the previous Friday, January 4, before the coffin was closed. The sight I shall never forget. His dear face, which had so often greeted me with a kind smile, was hardly disfigured at all. He looked as if he were only asleep, and his folded hands holding a green wreath and a palm-branch seemed the natural symbol of that uprightness and piety which he retained up to the last, through all his sufferings. Stiff and motionless on guard at the head of the coffin, stood General Gerlach, one of his oldest friends, so soon to follow him, owing to the injury done to his health by walking in the procession.

"It was a sad and touching spectacle. All those rich qualities of mind and heart laid to rest after such bitter suffering! But if I once begin to speak of it, it will be difficult to say when this letter will reach you.

"I have only seen King Wilhelm that day as we came out of church, but I met the Queen last Sunday at the Radziwill's whither she had gone, like myself, to offer birthday congratulations to the Princess. She was most gracious and kind, giving me her hand and saying a few words in a voice full of feeling. The last occasion on which I had seen her was seated at her little tea-table two days after Christmas, when she was still Princess."

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<sup>1</sup> He died January 2, 1861.

*To Frau Richard.*

“BERLIN, *January 24, 1861.*

“To-day is the birthday of our great Friedrich II., and every Prussian in thinking of it must surely say to himself: If Heaven would but bestow on us another such a genius for a King! But we won't be ungrateful, and must be glad of the King we have got. Honesty of purpose, sincerity to others as well as to oneself, and good plain common sense are after all not bad guides in a difficult time. And God Himself will point out the way. Things in Germany will not ever happen as they have happened in Italy.<sup>1</sup> Our course will be quite a different one, though our ends may be the same. After all, it is a grand thing for us that we can look up with such confidence and affection to our King, and that he wins all hearts wherever he goes. Of course, he is attractive in quite a different way from his predecessor; surely no monarch ever possessed a greater charm than the latter.

“When I began this letter, I never dreamt that his, the King's end, or to speak more correctly, his deliverance, was so near at hand. When one recalls his high mental endowments, his capacity for recognizing and drawing forth the good and the noble in everything, when one remembers his almost poetic imagination, his gentle spirit, so full of delicate and affectionate consideration for others, how hard it is to think of all this, coming to so tragic an end! Yet no! His *spirit* was not engulfed in the darkness which eclipsed his mind. According to the testimony of the clergyman, a friend of mine, who was with him almost every day during the last months, there were two things of which he was always sensible, and to which he always responded, even in his darkest hours: the love of God and love of his wife. At the mention of divine things his mind seemed to clear, and he was aware of his wife's presence and her loving devotion, when apparently wrapped in unconsciousness of all besides. At such times, some solitary word of affection, some little sign of gratitude would unexpectedly penetrate the thick veil that obscured his mental faculties, coming forth with a great effort, as it were, from the inmost depths of his heart, and surprising every one by evidence of how the fire still burned beneath the ashes.

“Forgive me for talking so much of what can scarcely be of interest to you, but you can understand how nearly these things affect us all and fill our thoughts. As for myself, I have so often, and in so many ways, come into contact with the King, have become

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<sup>1</sup> Victor Emanuel had become King on March 17, 1861.



familiar with so many of his inmost thoughts and with the profound piety of his character, that for me it is not alone the King that is dead, but a man whom I personally love and respect.

" You speak of the sorrow that Bunsen's death has occasioned me. A great portion of my life has gone with him. For many years I have been wont to refer to him in all important matters affecting my public and private life, conferring with him constantly in spirit even when not actually by letter or by word of mouth. The entire course of my life has been really determined by him. But for him, I should not have stayed in Rome beyond the ordinary traveller's visit ; but for him, again, I should not have gone to Egypt, nor, indeed, should I be sitting here writing to you. How strangely things in this world are linked together ! He was another instance of a man possessed alike of a powerful intellect and of a fascination and charm, an affectionate devotion to his friends such as rarely met with. I am so glad to think that I saw him twice this summer, and autumn, and that I was able to spend a few quiet days at his house. The exuberance, the versatility of Bunsen's mind were really unparalleled. In politics, in knowledge of classical antiquities, in theology, and in the Church, everywhere, he inspired new ideas and opened fresh vistas. Many a time doubtless his imagination led him to overstep the mark, but from his very errors one can derive inspiration, and never, never did he belie his innate love of truth, never did he serve or pander to vain and frivolous ends, nor indulge in motives of selfishness ! "

*To Frau von Bunsen.*

" BERLIN, *January 26, 1861.*

" I have just been reading Brandis' excellent reminiscences,<sup>1</sup> brought me to-day by his son, and I feel, my dear and honoured friend, I can no longer refrain from writing to you, filled as I am with varied emotions, a spirit of exaltation mingling with my sadness.

" I have been long silent, finding it difficult to speak or to write. Then, whenever I got a quiet moment amid many interruptions, I felt overwhelmed, and could not make up my mind to begin. That not a day has passed without my being with you in spirit, that my heart has felt with and for you in all you have been feeling, the silent hours of sorrow, as well as those uplifting moments spent in contemplating the past and looking

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<sup>1</sup> "Reminiscences of Bunsen and his Friends," 1814-1816. By Professor C. A. Brandis at Bonn.

forward to the future, all this you know. And I, on my part, know that you have admitted me into the circle of your thoughts and feelings, and have allowed me to dwell therein with you.

"I thank you from my heart for your dear letter. It was an especial pleasure to me to see your handwriting just now. The letter came on the day of the King's funeral. My mind, like yours, was full of the thoughts, that now the two friends, whose mutual affection had never changed, were once more united. Now they will recognize and know one another in the innermost core of their being, and all earthly things that parted and estranged them will fall away into nothingness. You can imagine how deeply the King's death has affected me, I, who have so often experienced his kindness and charm. And this, thanks to your dear husband, with what pleasure I here use the word the formal use of which we once spoke at Bonn! The last time I saw the King was in his company at Charlottenburg, a week before the illness. I never saw him while he was ill, never again till he lay dead in his coffin. Before that, in August, after his attack at Pillnitz, he said to me: 'I must make haste and set my worldly affairs in order, for I have been warned that I have not much time remaining to me.' He left his work unfinished and there is no one to carry it on, for although his plans were the outcome of an innate, divine nobility of character, they were none the less opposed to God's purposes with regard to the world's history.

"You know that I have undertaken to write for Brockhaus the short biography of Bunsen. I am busy with it now and am torn between conflicting feelings of affection and despondency, for it is really beyond my powers, and often the pen falls from my hand. When I have written it all out as a rough draft, I shall be in a position to ask you or George some questions upon certain details.

"It is curious how simply his life falls into large sections, each one having its own significance and special character. His life is, indeed, a great moral Kosmos, beautiful in its completeness and harmony: The youth with his aspirations, the busy man, and the man of riper years returning to a life of intellectual leisure, everything in him is a model and a type."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, January 26, 1861.

"Yesterday there was a great reception to all the official world at the Schloss. The King addressed them collectively, the different departments together, and did it very well. For

instance, in speaking to the members of the Academy, he said quite simply and modestly, that he could not enter into scientific interests with the full understanding possessed by his brother, but that he recognized their importance and should hold them in the highest esteem.

“Peace ? or War ? No one knows. And I myself don’t like to hazard a conjecture, though I am more inclined to believe that peace will be maintained.”

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“BERLIN, *March 15, 1861.*

“I am making use of a few spare moments before the arrival of the Greeks,<sup>1</sup> who meet here to-day. I have but just returned from dining with the Crown Prince and have, for the first time, made a nearer acquaintance with his two most sweet children.<sup>2</sup> The Crown Princess laughed very much when I told her that I was her oldest acquaintance among those present, having had the honour of seeing her anno 1842, in the cradle, when she was about the age of her own little Princess. She was very gracious and kind, referred to having met me at Baden a year and a half ago, and told me she thought Silesia, the Prussian province, much finer and more beautiful than Baden. The Crown Prince spoke to me with lively interest of a scientific expedition he is sending to Greece. . . .”

The Memoir of Bunsen, on which Abeken had bestowed much tender care, was published in the summer of 1861, and he immediately sent a copy to Frau von Bunsen, and in replying to her letter of thanks, he says :—

“BERLIN, *July 16, 1861.*

“My most hearty thanks for your kind words. I must confess that, all the time I was writing it, I could do nothing but think with trepidation and embarrassment of what you would say. My sole consolation was that I knew of no one who could have written it with more reverence and affection. However, so long as my portrait of him does not give you a strange and disturbing impression, I am quite satisfied.

“My uncle writes : ‘Your book brings Bunsen before me ; though written in the shape of an ordinary dictionary article,

<sup>1</sup> The members of the Greek Society of which mention has been made.

<sup>2</sup> Prince Wilhelm, born 1859, and Princess Charlotte, born 1860.

the book is worthy of the highest praise. He inspired and effected great things in his time, and amid all adverse chances preserved a noble and untarnished integrity of character.' This shows me that my words must have conveyed at least some reflection of his personality. One thing of which I am particularly glad, and for which I have specially to thank you, is that I feel I have avoided a panegyrical tone. This was my great danger, and nothing could have been more unworthy of him."

*To Frau von Bunsen.*

"BERLIN, August 7, 1861.

"I have just received kind messages from the King and Queen, thanking me for my biography. The King's was only the usual formal communication sent through the Cabinet Council; but the Queen wrote so charmingly, that I must copy out for you what she says, for it gives such a delightful proof of the personal interest she graciously takes in the matter. 'Your biographical sketch,' she writes, 'of your dear Bunsen, is a beautiful and worthy monument of regard from one of his most devoted friends. I thank you not only for sending it to me, but for taking the work in hand and carrying it out in the way you have done. Baden, July 20, 1861. AUGUSTE.' I was really pleased and touched by this, as you will be."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, July 26, 1861.

"... You ask about the change in the Ministry here, and whether it will affect me in any way. I don't think so. Count Bernstorff knows me to a certain extent, and has always shown himself friendly and well-disposed. However, I have no near relations with him, and shall probably continue to attend to the business of my post as heretofore. Meanwhile, he will, most likely choose those he has about him as his occasional travelling-companions. Moreover, he will hardly take up office *de facto* before the beginning or even the end of September. Until then, Herr von Schleinitz will probably be nominally in command, though he is going away for a cure, so Herr von Gruner will have the actual management of affairs.

"You speak with indignation and sorrow of the Baden attempt.<sup>1</sup> Yes, it was a dreadful business, and you can imagine how alarmed we all were at the news. We have, indeed, cause

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<sup>1</sup> King Wilhelm I. had been slightly wounded at Baden by a pistol shot.



to be thankful that the danger was averted from his precious head, and this not only because of our intense affection for his person, which was the prevailing sentiment at first, but also in consideration of the consequences, which might have been dreadful. This attempt won't, thank goodness, be exploited for party purposes, as was the case when the attempt was made on Kotzebue, notwithstanding that the latter was only a private person and not a crowned head. The King is too noble for this, all the more so, as it was aimed especially at him, and he has given a good snub to those wretched people who tried to make out that the outrage was the result of his course of policy, and a warning to him to abandon it. One who knows him well, told me the other day, what a delight it was to see that this painful experience had not embittered the King, nor upset his nerves. To-day's *Staatsanzeiger* publishes a very fine proclamation from him expressing his thanks for the many tokens of affection shown him."

Abeken again accompanied the Minister to Ostend, and from there writes to his uncle, Rudolf Abeken :—

"August 31, 1861.

"I saw the King here for the first time since the attempt on his life. It is a real pleasure to find him so well and so hearty and bright, and more resolute than ever. A man of greater sincerity and truth is not to be found in Prussia. The bathing here agrees with him, and he will need a reserve of strength for all he has to go through on leaving this place; first the manœuvres, then the meeting with the Emperor Louis Napoleon, the travelling, the Coronation at Königsberg, and the celebrations in Berlin."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, October 21, 1861.

"May the sun shine to-morrow when the King makes his state entry into Berlin as it does to-day! I hear that everything went off well at Königsberg, and both foreigners and our own people were pleased. . . ."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, October 23, 1861.

"The weather was glorious and the entrance into Berlin yesterday was a success; a beautiful and magnificent sight, and

the universal enthusiasm carried one away. There was such genuine and hearty devotion, and all that the King is in himself and the confidence he inspires is an assurance for that which he has not yet accomplished. The reception was like that given to a victorious soldier after a great battle. One may well say that God has done much for him. It is his first appearance in Berlin since the attempt on his life, when God's merciful hand was over him.

"The sight of the thousands and thousands of people filling every place except the narrow space through which the procession had to pass, was, indeed, wonderful. The various Guilds <sup>1</sup> marched first followed by soldiers, then the King riding, beaming with happiness as he acknowledged the greetings of the people, and accompanied by the Crown Prince and old Wrangel.<sup>2</sup> The Queen in a gilded glass coach, gracious and pleased, the other carriages containing young and pretty ladies; the arrival at the ancestral castle, where the Royal Standard was floating in the sunshine, all these formed a grand and interesting series of pictures. In the evening there were illuminations."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, October 24, 1861.

"There is not much to say about Compiègne.<sup>3</sup> It was only a visit of ceremony, which passed off in the best and pleasantest manner. There was no talk of treaties. The conversations between the monarchs could only have been of the most ordinary and superficial character. But the personal impression on both sides was very good, and a sort of security for peaceful and friendly relations for the immediate future was established."

His uncle, Rudolf Abeken writes to him in December :—

"The departing year has brought much of importance and much of sadness also. I often think of your good King, to whom the first year of his reign was certainly not a rosy one. The loss of a beloved brother, his own attempted assassination, the elections,

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<sup>1</sup> The Butchers' Guild had the first place in the procession, a privilege accorded them for having escorted the niece of the Great Elector out of the town in a time of danger, and bearing the banner which she had embroidered for them. Tradesmen and citizens with their bands, wearing the quaint costume of the time of the old Dessauer; the musketeers wearing that of the time of the first King of Prussia.

<sup>2</sup> Field-Marshal von Wrangel.

<sup>3</sup> King William I. returned the Emperor Louis Napoleon's visit.

the Amazon, and now the death of Prince Albert.<sup>1</sup> I cannot tell you how much this last event has touched my heart, and who would not be touched in thinking of him and the Queen, the royal children, and the mourning of the whole country ? ”

Abeken had long been accustomed to be asked to the social evenings of the Prince-Regent and the Princess of Prussia, and he was still commanded to come, especially by the Queen, and in her little tea-room the conversation between the distinguished men present was always of great interest ; or there would be reading aloud, or pictures to be examined. The fashion of ladies' dress in those days, was ill-adapted for the small room and not a little embarrassing to the gentlemen.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“BERLIN, *September 11, 1861.*

“ I cannot go to sleep without having a chat with you in answer to your letter, now that I have got out of the tea-caddy with whole limbs. This time there were fourteen persons there, four of them ladies with good-sized crinolines.

“ You ask about the tea-caddy, don't you ? That is a nickname for the tiny room in which their Majesties have tea in the evening, after a small party. The Queen makes and pours it out herself. She has sometimes been so gracious as to invite me. It is, indeed, very pleasant. The two Princes and Princesses Radziwill were there this evening, and Minister von Auerswald, a Chamberlain and a lady of the Court. The conversation was very animated. An Arabic basin, which had been presented to the Queen turned the conversation to the East. Their Majesties are very kind and gracious on such occasions, the Queen intelligent and stimulating, and the King's innate kindness and amiability make one feel quite at ease.”

The Electoral Hesse affair, with which Abeken had been engaged under different Ministers, again occupied public attention, and this meant increased work for him, both social and official.

*To Baroness von Bunsen.*

“BERLIN, *February 16, 1862.*

“ The last two days were the worst, although I had to sit nearly all day inactive, but the Chamber, or to express myself

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<sup>1</sup> Prince Albert, the Consort of Queen Victoria of England.

more correctly, the House of Delegates, where the Minister wished to have me behind him as his *adlatus*, in order to have information occasionally from me, which was not necessary. But to sit there so many hours listening to speaker after speaker, all saying the same thing in different ways, one mildly, another wildly, and nothing to be understood from any of them when practical matters were touched upon, was trying. It was about the Hesse affair. The vital point of the question, which alone concerns the Chamber, namely the legal one, is long settled for every right-minded and sensible German, not blinded by party views, and it would have been good to enforce it by a short and decisive vote carrying the weight and authority of the elected representatives of the nation. But every speaker had to discuss at length the ways and means, whether and what shall be said in Cassel, whether Herr von Sydow shall be recalled, and who shall replace him. Whether England in her cotton scarcity, or France in her financial need, or Russia in her distress at the emancipation of the serfs, can or will mix themselves up in the matter, every petty district judge from the provinces, and every journalist knew perfectly. Each one of them is ready to take Herr von Sydow's place at Cassel, or rather Count Bernstorff's place in Berlin. Thus the world would be set in order directly!

"This is a grave time for us and it is of moment that all the staunch elements of Prussia rallied round the Government. The coalition between the German Middle States and Austria, which is proved by the celebrated Identical Note, of which you have, of course, read in the newspapers, causes me no apprehension, though the situation is serious. It is dangerous for Prussia not to go forward, but to act without a man of genius as leader is impossible. And where is such a leader to be found now in Prussia? It requires a man of genius who can act and not merely live. A genius may err and fail, his failures God may so turn to account as may be best for the governance of the world, but every failure, every error, in a man of mediocre ability, however honourable he may be, is ruin. He cannot run the risk of acting wrongly, so he would rather do nothing. Foreign affairs would not trouble me, but internal ones! On the throne we have the best will and sound intellect, but what influences!

"Vacillating Ministers, an Upper Chamber which is led by party interests, a second Chamber which has neither moral nor intellectual weight; the Upper Chamber might play a brilliant role, if instead of divided interests, it would be guided by a wise patriotic head. But a people, however honest, faithful and clever, without political education, and without a leader!



"And yet, 'may I never abandon my confidence, it has always compensated me for all I have suffered.' I believe in Prussia and Germany, although we may still go through hard times, and not live to see the end. The germ living in the Evangelical part of the nation cannot be lost.'

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, April 7, 1862.

"How gladly I should have replied to your letter of March 18th and 19th at once, for then you would certainly have had a political letter, as our ministerial crisis was settled and Parliament dissolved, which hardly any one can understand without seeing behind the scenes how the reactionary monkey has forced the Liberal cat to pull the chestnuts of the Chambers out of the fire of public opinion, so that they—the cats with sadly burnt paws, nails, they did not have—might display them in public. If that is not like the Sphinx or the Delphic Oracle! With this intelligent oracular observation about our unintelligible state of affairs, I will say nothing more about politics.

"You received no letter because I had many other things to think about as well as politics, that is business and comedy. I have again been acting at Court, and played last month before the pit filled with princes. The King wished to see our 'Provincial Man,' I wrote to you about our performance of it on January 3rd, and we could not but repeat it. As the King and Queen were greatly amused and spoke very kindly about it, it was a pleasure to me to help the beloved and honoured Majesties pass a pleasant hour in the midst of their cares. There was, of course, a good deal of preparation and many rehearsals with their vexations and pleasures, for it is always a pleasure to do anything with such dear people as the Radziwills. You know that I played Sperling. Prince Boguslav's wife, Princess Leontine, who took the part of old Mother Stahr, wrote a very pretty epilogue, which her little daughter of thirteen, recited, and so the thing went off very well. There was a special pleasure in seeing the ordinary people of a small town personated by ladies, who by education and station fill the highest positions. The sweetness and grace which prevented the common from becoming vulgar, made it doubly delightful. If you remember that much of the play turns upon the imaginary presence of the King, you will understand what it was to play those scenes before the King. This makes up for what our plays lacked in comparison to Ristori whom we had all seen act before the King at the palace, but a few days previously. She played the part incomparably,

of a lady with intelligence, humour and genius (so that I kept fancying myself in Rome when I shut my eyes), but without that refinement which the most gifted actress cannot acquire, but which the real aristocrat, such as those who acted at the Radziwill's theatre, never loses even when acting the part of the fish-wife, the wife of the excise officer, or custom house officer. But she is Italian through and through, which greatly delighted me.

"You see we are not entirely immersed in politics, and do not forget the 'Dulce est desipere in loco.'"

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, April 19, 1862.

"Only be patient and considerate with my letters and per-versity. Letters are just written for the moment, and when I am obliged to weigh every word in long despatches, it is a recreation for me to let myself go. I have had so much to do these last months, that it is a relief to me to do nothing, and like the peasant, I reflect that time cannot hang heavily on my hands, for I have nothing to do."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, May 17, 1862.

"What occupies minds here is the Electoral Hesse affair, the Elector is going on too madly, and his latest acts are insults to both Austria and Prussia.<sup>1</sup> If they point this out to him seriously, he really will yield, and I had rather that the Government did this than his own people, as was done in 1830 to Duke Carl of Brunswick. I recognize the old truth, 'Hominum confusione et dei providentia,' and it comforts me. If it had to be 'hominum sapientia,' it would be much worse."

This change of Ministry took place in March, Count Bernstorff remaining Minister of Foreign Affairs. The constitutional conflict became sharper, and the Ministry weakly advised yielding. Bismarck was appointed President provisionally, on September 23rd, 1862, and further changes were imminent.

On October 8th, Bismarck became Prime Minister, and Minister for Foreign Affairs as well, and Count Bernstorff resigned.

The Upper Chamber rejected the Budget, on the 11th October, and while accepting that of the Government, they declared the other one illegal and closed the Session on the 13th.

<sup>1</sup> By Bismarck's management, the Constitution of 1831 was restored on November 24, 1862.



BISMARCK





## CHAPTER VII

### UNDER BISMARCK

1862-1863

“Vergebens, dass Ihr ringsum wissenschaftlich schweift  
Ein Jeder lernt nur, was er lernen kann,  
Doch der den Augenblick ergreift,  
Das ist der rechte Mann.”—*Faust, I.*

At the Conference held on September 30, Bismarck declared that great questions were not solved by speeches, nor by majorities, but by “Blood and Iron.” At the closing of the Landtag on October 13, the Government announced that all prospect of agreement on the Budget was at an end, but the Government would be carried on without it.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“BERLIN, October 23, 1862.

“I am convinced that the Government has, on the whole, taken the right course. . . . Except my chief, Herr von Bismarck, there are no men of mark in the Ministry, and in the Chamber of Deputies there are fewer still, either as to talent or character, except some of the extreme party, but Prussia cannot submit to be governed by them, nor ruled by the stupid majority. The men who ought to represent Prussia must somehow be brought forward. It must come to that. Our present system tends to bring mediocrities to the front. . . .

“In foreign policy, the unlooked-for catastrophe in Greece<sup>1</sup> may lead to unexpected developments and a new grouping. I belong to the defenders of a waiting policy, as long as Prussia is not forced by her immediate interests to negotiate. Herr von Bismarck may still retain his youthful impulses, but he has grown prudent and mature, and rashness is not to be feared on his part. In the course of life one sees how little the destiny of the world rests with man, and thus one learns to trust in God’s guidance, and do one’s duty. So in our anxiety and struggle

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<sup>1</sup> King Otto was deposed in 1862 by the people.

to bring about German unity and to grow strong, we shall accomplish nothing without God's help, and must say :

“ ‘ Mit Sorgen und mit Grämen  
Und mit selbsteigner Pein,  
Lässt Gott ihm gar nichts nehmen.’ ”

“ Victor Emanuel and Italy as well as Rome, will have to learn this also, as poor Garibaldi has <sup>1</sup> . . . He is extinguished, not like a fallen star, but like a night-light in a sick-room. One thinks of him with regret and tenderness. His last performance has done more to injure Italy than all his other actions benefited her.”

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“ BERLIN, December 31, 1862.

“ The close of the old year has brought a change in our Ministry which affects me, but not unpleasantly, in that my good friend, Herr von Sydow has gone to Frankfort, and my good friend, Herr von Thile, member of our Græca, becomes Under Secretary, so that while the Minister himself is a stranger to me, my immediate official connections remain unaltered . . . and are pleasant and friendly. And the Minister too has shown himself kindly disposed towards me.”

The Chamber began its session on January 1, and the dissolution took place in September.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“ BERLIN, June 7, 1863.

“ Prussian affairs are not so desperate as they seem. The measures against the Chamber of Deputies, with which it is impossible to govern, and hardly to exist, are, I think, perfectly justifiable. The Government without a Budget is necessary, and probably more reasonable than the setting to rights of the Budget by a Chamber composed of members who know nothing about it. As far as I can understand it, the military organization is perfectly good, and in the present state of politics, it must be carried out with firmness.

“ Thus on the whole, I stand by the Government with complete conviction. Whether the tactics are right, or all their measures as to details, wise and justifiable, is another question.

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<sup>1</sup> Giuseppe Garibaldi was wounded and taken prisoner on August 28, 1862, at Aspromonte, in his attempt to take Rome.

Thus I consider that the new regulations,<sup>1</sup> although literally justifiable constitutionally, are neither wise nor intelligent, nor adapted to a free and law-abiding country. I should have nothing to say against Draconian laws as long as they pre-suppose wise repressive action. I should rather the Government did not take exceptional measures."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, June 27, 1863.

"There is a calm in foreign politics, I hope not the calm before a storm. As to Polish affairs,<sup>2</sup> the answer to the three Notes to St. Petersburg must be waited for. The Schleswig-Holstein<sup>3</sup> affair must be settled by the Federal Diet, possibly on July 9. We shall have a quiet time, I hope."

After a visit to Osnabrück, Abeken writes to his uncle:—

"I am sorry that nothing can come of the Diet of Princes to which they are invited by the Emperor of Austria, without previous consultation with Prussia. . . . How could any such project of reform be discussed and settled by the Princes in a few days! Where nothing can be done it is better to stay away. The blame will be thrown on Prussia, but quite unjustly, for the failure rests upon utterly different considerations, and in the affair itself. . . .

"The Polish Question retires into the background for the present, giving way to the German Question, which Austria so unexpectedly, and as it seems to me, so inopportunistly, brings forward. It is generally thought that war will not arise from the Polish Question. . . ."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, September 10, 1863.

"The results of the Diet at Frankfort leave a good deal still to be done, as you can fancy. 'When Kings build, the carter has a great deal to do,' and when they demolish (for their present efforts at building are, unfortunately, not much better), it is the same! If the Princes run a race in setting up the National

<sup>1</sup> The so-called Press Order, June 1, 1863.

<sup>2</sup> The rising in Poland, January, 1863. Convention between Prussia and Russia, February 8, 1863, which was not, however, ratified.

<sup>3</sup> The incorporation of Schleswig with Denmark was announced on March 30th, 1863. The Diet only decided to proceed against Denmark on October 1st, 1863.

Association, we poor diplomatists and half diplomatists have to swallow the dust."

Notwithstanding the political complications, Abeken managed to go to Switzerland for a short visit, and on to Milan. The weather, however, was not good, but his stay was enlivened by the presence of friends.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, October 24, 1863.

"My journey has ended well. It began with Goethe and ended with Goethe. The first person I saw was Fräulein Kestner, at Basel, the daughter of Werther's Lotte, and the other was Werther's, (*sit venia verbo*), own daughter-in-law, Ottilie von Goethe, in Vienna, on Tuesday, the twentieth. She sends her regards to you, and so did her white-haired sister, Ulrike von Pogwisch."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, November 29, 1863.

"No politics to-day! The Schleswig-Holstein affair is a great one, but I consider it has more than political significance, one in which politics and morality are united in a really ideal and platonic manner, and of great political importance.

"There is scarcely time enough to bestow upon the great events of the day. The situation, according to an old diplomatic expression, *palpitante d'actualité*. How happy the Pastor in the Oberlausitz, who at this year's Church Visitation, was found still praying that God would put an end to the frightful waste of blood in the Crimea. He had not heard that peace had been declared!"<sup>1</sup>

The Schleswig-Holstein question had arisen again at the death of Frederick VII.<sup>2</sup> Various interpretations had been put upon the Treaty of 1852,<sup>3</sup> and Christian IX. understood it in his own way.<sup>4</sup> Austria and Prussia prepared for war, with the intention of protecting Schleswig-Holstein from the violence of Denmark, though they were

<sup>1</sup> The Treaty of Paris, March 30, 1856.

<sup>2</sup> November 15, 1863.

<sup>3</sup> The Treaty of London, 1852, settled the succession both to the throne of Denmark and the Duchies of Schleswig-Holstein.

<sup>4</sup> On November 18, 1863, Christian IX. announced the incorporation of the Duchies.



opposed by England and Russia. Abeken had been specially engaged upon this question in 1848-1849, soon after he had entered the Foreign Office, so the work again came into his hands in 1863 and 1864.

*To Frau Richard.*

“BERLIN, December 21, 1863.

“When I am troubled because this Christmas is one of worry, I get ashamed of myself and say: ‘Our poor soldiers have to be out in this stormy weather, either in some wretched village or in camp, instead of enjoying their Christmas trees; but they went gladly, because they went in the service of their country.’ The late war scare is indeed, over, for it is certain that the Danes in Holstein will not oppose the German advance,<sup>1</sup> and it is a comfort to think that these holy days will not be stained with blood, as they would have been had they been resisted. But whether there will be war later on, to clear the air, no one knows. In any case it will be a misfortune.

“These thoughts are my daily bread, and take possession of head and heart, for the well-being or the reverse of many, depends upon this question.”

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<sup>1</sup> The Hanoverian and Saxon troops under General Hake entered Holstein and Lauenburg to carry out the Federal Execution.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN WAR—JOURNEY WITH BISMARCK—TO CARLSBAD, VIENNA, GASTEIN AND BADEN

1864

“Alles mit Gott,  
So hat es keine Noth.”

PRUSSIA'S different proposals were rejected, and the two Powers, Prussia and Austria, prepared for war against Denmark.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“BERLIN, January 15, 1864.

“You ask how I spent Christmas. In the midst of all sorts of excitement, of course, but the joyful festival was not disturbed. For instance, on Christmas Eve at the Olfers, Count Yorck's eldest son, Paul, left directly after seeing the Christmas tree, to join his regiment as Landwehr officer. The Olfers' son came for Christmas Eve, and joined the troops next morning, as army doctor. Two other sons of Count Yorck's are in the field, one a soldier by profession, the other as a Landwehr officer. Thus do the great events of the world touch family life very closely, and they gave a touch of gravity to the gaieties of the evening.

“The situation in Germany has decidedly improved, and a complete split between Prussia and Austria on one side and the other German governments on the other side, has, thank God, been avoided.<sup>1</sup> How much has been done for the Duchies cannot be estimated.

“The feeling in Prussia will calm down after to-day, on the dissolution of the Landtag. It was in an uncontrollable ferment. We hope for a moderate middle party, which will be able to come to an understanding with the Government, this is impossible with the leaders of the present Chamber. The extreme parties

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<sup>1</sup> The Federation at first refused to sanction the independent action of Austria and Prussia.

absorb all the others. If the Government will be cautious and go quietly everything will be all right."

On February 5th, Abeken mentions in his journal that the Danes had retired to the Danewerk, and on the 6th, the news which came through Count Choteck, of its occupation. Karolyi and Bismarck went out hunting.

*To Frau Richard.*

"BERLIN, February 14, 1864.

"Our unsolved problems have vanished for the moment, while our interest in foreign affairs and our sympathy for our fighting brothers, has silenced all party disputes. War! We have known nothing of it for a long time, now we have dear friends and relations at the front, who may fall at any moment.

"Our Prussian troops have been suffering more from fatigue and privation, which the severe season has intensified, than from fighting, but this does not seem to be at an end yet. A campaign such as this in winter is unprecedented indeed. I do hope that the war will not become worse, but old Europe is like a house that has been undermined, and a general explosion, whether of long or short duration, is almost unavoidable.

"The question which no one is able to answer, is, what Louis Napoleon is likely to do? Perhaps he is unable to answer it himself."

Towards the end of February, Abeken was informed by Bismarck that the King had conferred upon him the Order of the Crown of the second class, with the star, in recognition of his services, especially in regard to his work in the Schleswig-Holstein affairs.

Meanwhile the war continued.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, February 29, 1864.

"Be of good courage about the Duchies! There will be no more foreign rule there, no more tyranny and arrogance. Full and firm protection they must have.

"I had hoped that the sword would have taken the pen out of the hands of us who write, but so far the ink-work has increased, and when I chance to have a free hour either in the morning or evening I am so weary of writing that I am disinclined to take up my pen again even for a pleasanter use of it. How much I have to write you may guess when I tell you that the

Minister spoke of some draft of which I knew nothing, as a 'draft of Abeken's,' and when I looked at him in surprise, he said with a laugh: 'I get so many from you that I spoke mechanically.' The amount of paper used is incredible. I, even, am always astonished when I am obliged to have fresh supplies. It is bearable for me, but how my chief, the Minister, endures the responsibility of his enormous amount of work, as Minister-President, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and as Leader, is incomprehensible. His is an iron nature, one born to rule, physically and mentally, a man of great qualities, as one of his defeated opponents said of him recently."

During the preliminary sittings of the London Conference,<sup>1</sup> and after the storming of the redoubt at Düppel, Abeken writes to his uncle Rudolf:—

"You are warmly sympathizing in the brilliant results of April 18th, are you not? I don't like to speak of it, for the simplest account of it seems vainglorious. It was brilliant beyond all expectation. You can fancy our breathless suspense.

"An officer of high rank told me on Sunday evening that it might last for days, and the King sent Prince Friedrich Karl a telegram wishing him success in the intended attack. I heard the news early on Monday. Towards midday the King drove from the Kreuzberg to Wilhelm strasse and stopped at the door of our place, and had one of the staff who was at the window called, and told him that the attack had been successful and the entrenchments taken. The second Austrian plenipotentiary to the Conference, was here just at the moment, and honestly rejoiced at the news. We were sorry the English Minister was not present; we should have liked to have seen him turn green and yellow with rage! The King then drove Unter den Linden where he met a wounded officer, and told him the news. Then telegrams poured in with the news of greater successes. No one dreamt of the whole country being in our hands in little more than two hours, including the Brückenkopf. Count Clermont, the French military attaché, had written to the Emperor just before this, that we would only be able to take the outer works at first, and that it would be a long siege. He said afterwards that it was '*l'affaire la plus brillante et la mieux menée qu'il ait vue*,' and he has served both in the Crimea and in the Italian campaign.

"But the suspense and anxiety about our losses that Monday evening! I was fortunate in receiving a telegram from Head-

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<sup>1</sup> April 25 till June 26.



quarters early on Tuesday telling me that our dearest friends were neither wounded nor killed.

"You will see all details in the papers, and the letters of the privates and non-commissioned officers. You will delight in the restrained tone of the people. Well, we Germans, the North Germans especially, are of use in everything except in politics; we are good scholars, good poets, good soldiers, and perhaps in time we may become good politicians."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, May 14, 1864.

"Well, hostilities are at all events suspended until Whitsuntide.<sup>1</sup> The thunder of guns will not be deadening the sound of the bells, and many officers will be able to go home after all their exciting adventures.

"I wish the cessation of hostilities were to be for a longer time. Meanwhile, it will not be difficult to prolong it if the Conference is not over then. The Austrians have had a disaster at sea in what was otherwise a glorious affair. I was grieved, (as I had not expected it of England) at the demonstrations of joy about this in Parliament. It was not sympathy for the Danes, but petty spite and malice at the seeming defeat of a foreign fleet. But at the same time, it is a consolatory proof that the English are afraid of the future German Navy. They are no longer afraid of the Danish fleet, they think it has no future!"

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, June 10, 1864.

"The cessation of hostilities is prolonged for about a fortnight, and with the obstinacy of the Danes, it is likely that the war may recommence on the 26th. We are not afraid, such a bad peace does not suit us, you may be sure, and that is the chief thing. But if we are firm I do not think it will recommence, the others will give in. Don't be deceived by the newspapers, especially as to the alleged differences with Austria. There are some differences of opinion, but we are agreed as to essentials, which is the important thing at present. The explanation of the Hanoverian Government was capital! It ascribes a great part of the success to its interposition."

Abeken accompanied the King in his journeys from 1864 until after he became Kaiser, partly under Bismarck's orders and partly alone. This year they went to Karlsbad

<sup>1</sup> From May 12 till June 26.

with which he was charmed. The Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia with their respective Ministers met on June 24.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“KARLSBAD, June 11, 1864.

“Here we are at Karlsbad, my dear uncle, though rather against my inclination and quite unexpected, but the Minister had more work than usual and required to have me with him; most important work has to be done in the present state of public affairs while we are here where the King and Minister settle matters together. So we have an office, two councillors, clerks, and Herr von Keudell and myself.

“The Minister arrived the evening before last and the King yesterday morning. Thus I am seeing one health resort after another, which is all the better for me in case I ever have to try one on my own account. The country is glorious, the mountains through which the Tepl runs, are wooded, and there are several springs. The town in the midst of such scenery is a delight to the eyes and heart, rather too hot at times, in this narrow valley, but very beautiful and I hope the mornings will keep nice and cool. I intend to enjoy them all the more since I am not taking the waters, and as the Minister rises late, I get a walk before the day's work begins. Herr von Keudell<sup>1</sup> is a good walker.

“The Minister lives opposite so us, and the narrow pavement between us will be well trodden. The London Conference sits to-morrow at which a longer truce will probably be settled.

“The Emperor of Austria comes to-morrow; his Minister<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robert von Keudell, born 1824, Prussian statesman. Minister at Constantinople in 1872, at Rome in 1873, and Ambassador there from 1876–1887.

“Herr von Keudell had himself introduced to me at the Schloss ball. He is a very important man, director of the ‘personnel’ at the Foreign Office, and one of the few *intimes* of Bismarck, and I was very anxious to see him. He is still young, and looked very well in his white Landwehr uniform, the same that Bismarck wears. He has a fine, powerful head, and the most quiet and gentle manner, but he shares with his great chief that overworked and restless look which shows an over-taxed brain. . . . It feels queer to meet a man on whom so much of one's future life may depend! However, I don't think he has much to say to anything, for without the consent of the *Allehöchsten Chef* no one here dare lift a finger. It is extraordinary what awe that one man inspires, and it is catching.”—*In Three Legations*, by Mrs. Charles von Bunsen. (By permission of the author.—TR.)

<sup>2</sup> Johann Bernhard, Count von Rechberg and Rottenlöwen, Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1859–1864. He was the opposite of Bismarck in appearance, being short and slight. He was an extraordinarily clever statesman.

has been here two days. I think that this meeting between the leading men will do good."

The meeting did not, however, have the desired effect, and the war began again.

*To Marie von Olfers.*

"KARLSBAD, June 23rd, 1864.

"My heart beats somewhat when I consider that the war is again beginning, perhaps the guns are now firing, and those who have peace and war in their hands walk along to the springs chatting quietly. But they do not really have peace and war in their hands, and are probably feeling calm. At these last negotiations it has become plain to me how little power even the most distinguished and highly placed men have over fate, and the English may learn from their poet that :

'There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough hew them how we will.'

"I am glad that Bismarck openly and I think sincerely, recognizes this, and really feels it, although he acts with an energy and unweariedness as if everything depended upon him alone."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"KARLSBAD, June 30, 1864.

"This was an eventful day. As you ask about my daily work, I will tell you that of to-day which differs but little from any other day.

"We were just about starting for our usual walk at 5.45, when a messenger arrived from London, and immediately after him another from Berlin, and in duty bound we had to stop to see whether the despatches contained anything of sufficient importance for them to have been sent on here. That there was not we learned at eight o'clock, too late for our walk. We, therefore, climbed a rocky, wooded height a little out of the direct road, the Hirschensprung, where we breakfasted and enjoyed a glorious view of the Eger winding through the plain bathed in brilliant sunshine. Our coffee was spiced by reading the *Wanderer's Sturmlied*, and the *Elegie*. . . . By we, I mean my colleague Keudell, who is a great musician, and a man of refined, poetical tone, and almost as great an admirer of Goethe as I am. He is besides, a capital fellow and very agreeable. Then we went down and set to work with the despatches for the Messenger

to take back to Berlin. This done about seven o'clock when we paid a visit. Keudell played a sonata of Beethoven's; he is a splendid performer. About nine we went to our usual party, which consists of the three Ministers, Foreign Affairs, Home Office,<sup>1</sup> and War.<sup>2</sup> The latter has an agreeable wife with him, Frau von Roon and two daughters, and there was a General von Roeder and an adjutant of the King's also there. . . ."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"KARLSBAD, July 8, 1864.

"I barely had time to write the despatches this afternoon after taking a long walk, and I had a guilty conscience on meeting the King who said with his usual threatening gesture: 'So you have time for a walk instead of attending to your work. You just look out and I shall give you something extra to do.' It is a real pleasure to see the King in such good spirits. . . ."

*To Herr von Olfers.*

"DIE DREI LERCHEN, KARLSBAD, July 10, 1864.

"The King is, thank God, as strong and well as one could desire. As the Minister was not well (he is all right now), I took him the despatches when they arrived, and had his commands concerning them.

"The three victories, the diplomatic one over England, the fighting one at Alsen, and the political negotiations about the Zollverein,<sup>3</sup> which has brought Hanover to downright submission, would be almost unaccountable, were it not that God had saved us. The good understanding with Austria is more than a victory; in any case, it is a bloodless one, and is due to the moral strength of the King and Bismarck. I believe in its continuance because it depends upon the genuine recognition of how much Prussia and Austria are to each other. Our victory at Alsen has changed the conduct of Austria."

*To Frau von Olfers.*

"KARLSBAD, July 19, 1864.

"The day before we leave gives me little time, but one has to find time to obey his Majesty's commands, so I sit down with a clear conscience to write in the royal service. His Majesty

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Albrecht, Count zu Eulenburg.

<sup>2</sup> Albrecht Theodor, Count von Roon, 1803-1879. Became Minister for War 1859.

<sup>3</sup> The negotiations with Austria led to the Commercial Treaty and to the Zollverein of August 11, 1865.



commands me to send you his best thanks for your verses which gave him much pleasure. He spoke to me as soon as he saw me at the Grand Duchess Helene's yesterday evening and shaking hands said: 'How much I thank you for the verses you sent me yesterday, they are beautiful, simple and sincere. Write and tell Frau von Olfers in my name how very much pleased I am with them, and that I thank her for the pleasure she has given me. . . .'

"I really begin to believe in a peace with Vienna. The next few days will be interesting enough. We may leave via Prague to-morrow, and arrive on Thursday evening as the Minister does not like to travel at night. . . ."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"VIENNA, July 25, 1864.

"These are interesting days. The Danish plenipotentiaries have arrived, so we shall soon know whether this week will bring peace or war. We drove extra post with the Minister on Thursday morning, driving all day through the most beautiful and productive country, and all sorts of villages, but as there was not a house in which there was any food to be got, we reached Prague about eight, half-starved. . . .

"We were at Schönbrunn with the Emperor on Sunday afternoon, and he was very kind and pleasant. . . ."

*To Herr von Olfers.*

"WILDBAD GASTEIN,

STRAUBINGER'S HOTEL, August 4, 1864.

" . . . I hope you are satisfied with us and our work at Vienna.<sup>1</sup> It has been an astonishing success, especially on thinking of the Conference six weeks ago. . . . It was not easy, for the Danes were as determined as ever. They had indeed resigned themselves to the cession of Schleswig from the first, but hoped to keep part as compensation for the cession of that part of Jutland, and the northern part of Lauenburg. But the joint declaration of Prussia and Austria showed this to be out of the question, and obliged them to leave Jutland in our hands until the conclusion of peace, which is to me almost incomprehensible. We had to demand this otherwise we should have had no hold over them in carrying on the preliminaries of peace.

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<sup>1</sup> Preliminaries for the Peace of Vienna. Conferences between Bismarck and Quade. July 25, 1864, till August.

"They would have liked to wait on the chance of getting rid of the preliminaries. We are now anxiously awaiting news from Copenhagen, not about the ratification, but whether there has been a crisis there, and the Government strong enough. It would not be a bad thing if we had to lead King Christian back to Copenhagen."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"GASTEIN, August 13, 1864.

"The Duchies are liberated, but must be governed; it is not easy to know how, in all the uncertain and complicated question of rights, besides taking the political side into consideration. If only the hereditary right of one of the pretenders were quite clear, but I cannot say that it is, unfortunately, and what court of law can decide it? Not even the old German Empire with its Imperial Chamber and Councillor could help us, for the Supreme Court of the Empire could give judgment concerning Holstein only, and not about Schleswig."

*To Herr von Olfers.*

"BADEN-BADEN, VILLA STADHOFFER,  
August 30, 1864.

"We arrived yesterday afternoon and Flemming met us at the station. He had engaged the parterre of this villa for us, and is staying here himself, so the whole house is Prussian, a very comfortable feeling. . . .

"... I delight in working in this heavenly quiet . . . it (the Peace)<sup>1</sup> is growing, our stay at the Kaiserburg contributed towards it. The King is coming to-morrow, and Prince and Princess Karl to-day. It is a great relief staying so far off, and not to hear the bands on the promenade. If the fine weather continues this fifth act of our travelling drama will be *The Merchant of Venice*." The first was at Karlsbad, the second at Vienna, the third at Gastein, the fourth at Schönbrunn, and the fifth here."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, November 15, 1864.

"Well, peace at last.<sup>1</sup> While you are reading this to-morrow, the ratification will be exchanged at Vienna. I am delighted. The rest will follow, and I count on a peaceful settlement in Germany, and also very much on the prudence of the Hanoverian

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<sup>1</sup> The Peace of Vienna, in which Denmark gives up Schleswig-Holstein and Lauenburg.

Government, where there is no Herr von Beust craving popularity. . . .

"My relations with my Minister and our policy need not make you anxious. He is every inch a man, and his policy thoroughly Prussian, that is it is thoroughly German, and I agree with all my heart, though differing in details, which is the case with every official, but does not prevent pleasant work. You must not be led astray by the newspapers, which know little of the real circumstances. They think the world is for them only and their leading articles, and they see the world in their papers.

"You ask if I spoke with the Queen at Baden. To be sure, and often. She is always very gracious to me. She is a noble and much misjudged woman, of great intelligence and very earnest. She understands the real state of affairs, and is greatly interested in them and in great sympathy with them. Her influence is not much now, because she is, unfortunately, not on good terms with the Minister; this is partly personal, for the last Minister was a friend. . . . She is not unworthy of her grandfather, Karl August. . . ." <sup>1</sup>

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, December 22, 1864.

"First of all a happy and blessed Christmas. How I should like to have said this by word of mouth, but you know from my letters how impossible this was. The Minister has often said that I ought to find some one to take my place when I am obliged to be away, or in case of my being ill. There is no likelihood of this last, thank God. But unfortunately there is no one and I have not the gift of training people. Neither imagination nor self-importance convinces me that I cannot be spared just now, for it is the simple truth that I understand the Minister's wishes better than any one else, so it is easier for him to work with me, and this renders it easy and pleasant for me."

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<sup>1</sup> Queen Auguste of Prussia was a Princess of Saxe-Weimar, and a granddaughter of Karl August, the friend of Goethe.

## CHAPTER IX

### KARLSBAD, VIENNA, REGENSBURG, GASTEIN—MEETING BETWEEN THE KING OF PRUSSIA AND THE EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA—BADEN

1865

“Ich glaube keinen Tod ; sterb'ich alle Stunden  
So hab'ich jedesmal ein besser Leben funden.”

ANGELUS SILESIVS.

THE numerous notices of telegrams and despatches in Abeken's diary for 1865 are a proof of the prevailing political unrest. He tried to put everything in the rosiest light to his uncle to spare him anxiety. Much good, however, was attained after a great deal of vacillation amongst the Great Powers, and thus another war was warded off.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“BERLIN, June 18, 1865.

“After many disagreeable scenes the session of the Landtag came to an end yesterday. The Speech from the throne, which you have no doubt seen in the papers, was very sharp, but it was just and true unfortunately. Things cannot go on like this much longer, and some means must be found for a proper representation of the people, other than by a horde of chatterers, who have plenty of party opinions, and doctrines, with their own vanity as a rule of conduct, but no love of country.”

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

“HELENENHOF, KARLSBAD, June 27, 1865.

“We were delayed from day to day owing to the Minister's work, but at last got off on Sunday, staying a night at Schwarzenberg, and reached this place yesterday after driving through green valleys and fine woods, a most cultivated country. It was windy and rainy but the mountain air was very refreshing after the dust of Berlin. We clambered up to our eyrie at midday. My colleague, Keudell, who had the ordering of our private and official dwellings, with more poetical than practical thought, engaged this villa here on the most attractive of all the mountains hereabouts. It has a shady



garden, a splendid view and everything delightful, except the hundred steps up beyond the springs. It is all right for me, for I share his poetical taste, and have no occasion to go into the town except when inclination or hunger call me, and even this last has not been necessary so far, for the restaurant in a garden close by but somewhat lower down, is fairly good. But the Minister has to drive to the King every day, and often more than once, which is inconvenient, and I am almost afraid we shall be forced to move."

It was here that Abeken received the news of his friend, Count Yorck's death. In writing to the son he said: "I could not refrain from telling His Majesty when I saw him yesterday, about your father. He warmly expressed his sympathy, and asked after the sons at once, saying he remembered you and Paul at dinner at the castle, and what a pleasure it was to hear the name of Yorck. He also said he had been at Klein Oels as a boy. . . ."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"REGENSBURG, July 21, 1865.

"Our Karlsbad visit is over. We left in an open carriage for Eger, that is the Minister and his party. . . . We found work immediately, just brought by a Messenger. The King only arrived on Thursday about ten o'clock. . . . There was also much work for the King, as he had summoned all the Ministers from Berlin for a Council. We go to Salzburg with him tomorrow, where, perhaps, we may get a day's rest."

*To Marie von Olfers.*

"GASTEIN, August 10, 1865.

"We leave on the 18th to await the King at Salzburg, where he is to meet the Emperor of Austria on the 29th. This meeting<sup>1</sup> is a guarantee of peace, for this year, at all events. It has looked very warlike for some time. A war is always terrible, and one with Austria doubly so. I should not like to go through the dread and anxiety again, of this past year, even for the sake of the triumph. If war had been necessary for Prussia's honour, war there would have been. I have accomplished great arrears of work these past days with special pleasure because of the prospect of peace, for before that I had had to write in very warlike strains. . . ."

<sup>1</sup> The Agreement at Gastein on August 14, settled that Austria and Prussia should jointly rule the Duchies, but Lauenburg by Prussia only.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"LINDAU, August 24, 1865.

"We waited with the Emperor of Austria for nearly an hour for the King. The Emperor spoke to me very kindly. The Agreement was signed by both sovereigns on Sunday, a very hot day for it. I scarcely left my writing-table except for dinner and a short time at the Gala theatre. Monday and Tuesday were comparatively quiet, for the King and Emperor went to Ischl, while we stayed at Salzburg finishing up work. We came to Munich with the King on Wednesday and remain until midday, but I have seen nothing this time, for there were yards of despatches to be written, as the Minister expressed it. . . ."

Abeken obtained leave for a short visit to his uncle at Osnabrück before going to Baden with the King. In Bismarck's absence the King required some one to whom he could give verbal instructions.

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BADEN-BADEN, October 8, 1865.

"I have no heavy duties here, and little, too little work. You are right as to my serving a kind master, and I often feel how pleasant is the 'greeting of the master who commands.' And then I have no real responsibility, though being so near to him who holds the first position makes me often anxious. . . . One has above all things to be careful never to say a word too much. It is often wiser, though not right, to say too little, and I hope this is frequently the case with me. It is the safer side. I believe my sins are chiefly sins of omission. The King and Queen are both most kind and affable, and the former sociable when he gives me an audience. From long practice he has great clearness in grasping the *punctum saliens*, and has a sound understanding about everything, so that it is pleasant and easy to take his commands. There is not a more human sovereign. The society he has here is agreeable and some of the people of like tastes to his own."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"MÜNSTER, October 17, 1865.

"I cannot call the days at Baden other than pleasant. Not much work made easy by the King's gracious kindness; there was also much friendliness from all quarters, especially from Count Flemming and Grimm; the weather was fine and the walks delightful. . . . Yesterday at Coblenz was also pleasant.

The river fog cleared away after I had posted my letter to you, and I had a charming walk with the Radziwill ladies along the river banks. They are a creation of the Queen's, and she charged me to see them. . . ."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, October 23, 1865.

"You know from my letters that everything went off well at Münster, from first to last, and that nothing disturbed the high tone of the beautiful festivities, at which King and people met face to face, and I hope, heart to heart. The great function, the renewal of the homage, was touching. The King, his knightly figure so noble, his beautiful words, the Queen dignified and amiable, and all cordial and gay. The Westphalians are lively beyond all expectation. The fine and stately old town was a magnificent background for the illuminations in the evening. The celebration on the 19th, was in the Town Hall, the upper part of which was turned into a ballroom, where the dancing took place. Supper was served in the Hall of Peace, which was well lighted, and there had not been such a brilliant company there since 1648."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, November 8, 1865.

"Everything is gradually settling down to the old routine. My chief, Count Bismarck, arrived yesterday evening, cheerful and brisk. I only saw him at the station for a few moments, and to-day when he was getting into his carriage to drive to Potsdam to the King."

*To his Uncle Rudolf Abeken.*

"BERLIN, November 17, 1865.

"I never thought of your words on the politics of the day in my poem to the Græca,<sup>1</sup> but only of the general expression of feeling which we political members, Thile, Georg von Bunsen and I have when we enter upon the pleasant and neutral ground of classical poetry. Otherwise I don't complain of the 'distracting struggle,' for it is my profession, or in German, my calling. . . ."

<sup>1</sup> This Greek society was dissolved in 1867 owing to the intolerance of the Conservative, Herr von Thile, who even on this neutral ground, would not meet the men who desired freedom of thought. Abeken did not share this view. He thought nothing should separate old friendships, and he warmly espoused the side of young Georg von Bunsen, whom he had loved as a child at Rome, and who was then excluded. He rather preferred to give up the Society which he had promoted with such pleasure, than be without his friend, or do anything to grieve him.

## BOOK III

### CHAPTER I

#### DEATH OF RUDOLF ABEKEN—ENGAGEMENT AND MARRIAGE—WAR WITH AUSTRIA

1866

“ Nimm durch Deiner Engel Wacht  
Seel und Lieb und Gut in acht ;  
Führ das Schifflin durch die Wellen  
Und Hilf mir in allen Fällen.”

ABEKEN first began to visit the family of Olfers in August 1847, and his intimacy increased from 1849 until he became a daily visitor, and the much esteemed friend. He married the youngest daughter, Hedwig, on May 17, 1866, and so when two people become one in heart and mind it is impossible to portray the one truthfully without the other. . . .

The early days of the engagement were saddened first by the illness of Herr von Olfers, and then by the death of Abeken's uncle Rudolf, which occurred at the end of February. Abeken hastened to Osnabrück on receiving the sad news, and from there writes to his fiancée :—

“ I am writing in the old room which was mine as a boy until I went to the University. Here youth and age are united, the past is wonderfully linked to the present, and I should like to add, to the new hopes of the future.

“ How many hours of my youth have I spent in looking forward, and I smile now as I recall them, but I am very thankful for those days when *The Children's Advocate*<sup>1</sup> had an unconscious influence on my life, and when my good father became a mother to me, father and mother in one, and I can add so was also my uncle Rudolf. . . .”

Writing to Frau Schäfer about his uncle he ends with these words :—

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<sup>1</sup> By Frau von Olfers on the education of children.





HEDWIG VON OLFERS



"You have always been so sympathetic about my love of home and of my uncle that I feel impelled to tell you about his end, and you will not be vexed with me for doing so on a birthday. Life and death, joy and sorrow are intertwined and I never felt this more strongly than I do now, but lest you should feel annoyed at me for writing all this I will give you a bit of news which will give you pleasure, and for which you are not prepared. I do so with the shyness almost of a young girl. You know the name of Olfers from my frequent mention of the family. The eldest daughter lost her husband, Count Yorck last summer, and the second is known to you by her writings, her fairy tales and drawings. The third, Hedwig, although gifted, is a quiet home-loving girl, and she, Hedwig, has been for a week, can you believe it? I can scarcely do so myself yet, but she is my dear fiancée, and will become my wife in May."

A telegram from Bismarck recalled Abeken to Berlin.

By the Treaty of Gastein, the government of the Duchies was to be shared between Prussia and Austria. Freiherr von Manteuffel<sup>1</sup> took over the government of Schleswig for Prussia, and an Austrian general, Freiherr von Gablenz,<sup>2</sup> was placed in Holstein.

The Agreement caused much dissatisfaction in Germany. There was a strong desire for more entire union which was impossible while there are two Powers in the German Federation. Austria was opposed to any expansion of Prussia, and came to an understanding with the Middle States about this.

Prussia realized that the German question could only be settled by war, and entered into negotiations with Italy, which wished to make use of this opportunity to recover Venitia from Austria. These negotiations claimed Abeken's close attention, and kept him at work far into the night. He followed the King and Bismarck to the army headquarters.

*To his Wife.*

"REICHENBERG, June 20, 1866. 5.45 P.M.

"We are just installed in a comfortable house having arrived half-an-hour ago. After sending a telegram to Berlin for the Minister, I turn at once to you.

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<sup>1</sup> Edwin, Freiherr von Manteuffel, 1809-1885.

<sup>2</sup> Ludwig, Freiherr von Gablenz, Austrian General at the battle of Königgrätz.

"I dined at the hotel with the Minister and the rest of the party, as our cook could not get at the things. How surprised I was when a stately cuirassier officer accosted me at Görlitz, and I recognized Peter. He was delighted at having been called out, but his wife was distressed. . . . I also spoke to Herr von Canitz for a moment at Görlitz. Our stay was short everywhere, but sufficiently long for enthusiastic receptions. . . ."

*To the Same.*

"CASTLE SICHROW, BOHEMIA,  
July 1, 1866.

"I have but a moment to begin a letter to you after getting through with some immediate work and getting ready for dinner with the King at four o'clock. Though only in travelling garb I had to be clean at least. You will find the place at which I am writing on the map. . . . This is a stately castle belonging to Prince Rohan, who was our host for the chamois hunting at Gastein. His Master of the Ceremonies has to entertain us, but we shall most likely leave this evening for Turnau, the next town, for the King wishes to overtake the army."

"7 P.M.

"You must excuse my breaking off my letter. We are fortunately to stay in this comfortable castle to-night, and after a good night's rest, start about seven to-morrow morning. Last night was rather disturbed, for Keudell came in about eleven after I was comfortably in bed, to tell me he was going to the station to see that the horses were kept saddled, for the Minister feared the enemy might take the King prisoner by a *coup de main*, and said that there might be an alarm for us to leave. I dressed quickly, packed, and lay down in my clothes ready for a signal. But the night passed quite quietly, though there was a certain sort of excitement, and little sleep. The Minister said that I had acted rightly, and he had told the King that I should go to him with the despatch-box at the first alarm. So far all has gone well. There is news of a victory, bloody and dearly bought."

*To the Same.*

"GITSCHIN, July 1, 1866. Evening.

"We have got on much faster than we imagined we should before we left Berlin. No one there could have thought we should be at Gitschin by midday, Monday, right in the enemy's country. When we left Berlin, this place, important as a connection between our two armies, had just been taken after great sacrifices.



The King knew it on Sunday evening and I yesterday morning. We left Castle Sichrow about seven this morning, and arrived here about twelve. The victor, Prince Friedrich Karl met us on the battle-field, a little way from the village, where the shattered walls, burnt houses, trampled fields, dead horses, and arms and accoutrements scattered about, and even the bodies of the dead presented a sad spectacle. I never thought I should ever see a battle-field at such close quarters. Our seriously wounded officers were in a village hospital, and I thanked God that no dear one was amongst them, and I humbly prayed for His continued mercy. The Austrians have retreated to a strong position beyond the Elbe, between two fortresses, Josephstadt and Königgrätz, and seem to wish to fight a decisive battle there. Prisoners report that their army is greatly discouraged after its repeated defeats."

*To the Same.*

"GITSCHIN, *July 3, 1866.*  
Tuesday, 2 P.M.

"Our troops are fighting at about half-an-hour's distance from this place, and it is just possible that our two regiments may be in action.

"We thought to have a day's rest after yesterday's news, but we were awakened about midnight with reports of a battle, to which the King would go with his suite, Keudell and Bismarck, of course, also going. I had to stay here. I own that I was dreadfully sorry, and after doing a little work, *tant bien que mal*, I am sitting here in painful anxiety."

*To the Same.*

"HORÈC, (BETWEEN GITSCHIN AND KÖNIGGRÄTZ),  
*July 4, 1866.*

"I was not present, unluckily, when the whole Austrian army was beaten yesterday in its strong position between Josephstadt and Königgrätz. It has been forced beyond the Elbe. The Minister went as a soldier with the King early yesterday. They only expected some reconnoitring, but found a battle going on, where no less than 200,000 were engaged on each side. They were thirteen hours on horseback, and sometimes exposed to fire, and only got back here about midnight. I got the news of the victory in a despatch the Minister sent from the field of battle, about eight o'clock, and I came on here with the headquarters last night. We were quite fresh and not at all tired on our arrival at daybreak. I am writing at the head

forester's, whose kind wife is doing all she possibly can for us. Accounts pour in from all sides, of brilliant attacks, of trophies and of losses. You will learn everything from the newspapers.

"Peter came just after the Crown Prince had left us yesterday. You can fancy how happy the latter was. His meeting his father on the field of battle was the most glorious moment of his life. He spoke most sympathetically to Peter, as did the King at Görlitz, who said: 'You are leaving much, I know, it is all the finer of you.' I met Peter again at the headquarters restaurant. I have not time to describe how picturesque it is. News just come of the surrender of the fortress of Königgrätz, but it is not quite certain. Captain von Wrangel was about making a reconnaissance with some hussars yesterday at the gate of the fortress, and finding it open, went in. They, of course, took him to the Commandant who wished to know what he wanted, and Wrangel declared he came from the Crown Prince to demand its surrender, which the Commandant found so natural that he asked for twenty-four hours to consider, without demanding the authorization, and instead of taking the Prussians prisoners, let them go. That is a lively performance, and shows the spirit of our troops who find nothing impossible. . . ."

*To the Same.*

"HORËC, July 6, 1866.

"You will see in the papers that the Austrians are beginning to give in and are asking the intervention of France. . . .

"We Prussians may well be proud. It has been a series of victories such as have not taken place since the time of Napoleon, and they have been won over the bravest and most honourable of enemies."

*To the Same.*

"PARDUBUTZ, July 7, 1866.

"You see we continue to advance. . . . Our army is advancing rapidly on Vienna. We must occupy as much of the country as possible before Austria calls upon Louis Napoleon. . . ."

*To the Same.*

"PARDUBUTZ, July 8, 1866.

Sunday Afternoon.

"There is no lack of confusion at headquarters, and I am thankful to God that we are advancing. I keep thinking how frightful the confusion would be if we were beaten and had to retreat suddenly. I shall not easily forget the night we set out from Gitschin to follow the victorious army. Escorts before

and behind us, the huge column stopping every moment not knowing what had happened, uncertain whether the enemies' scouts were near or not ; the occasional firing of a gun, the feeling of impatience and hurry until we reached Horèc at daybreak, where no one could give us any information, and no one had any definite information about anything. . . . You are right in trusting Bismarck. His campaign begins now, for it requires as much skill and firmness to parry the moves of Austria, who is playing an almost infamous game, by throwing herself at the feet of Louis Napoleon. His favourite plans as to Venice is to isolate us. We have the work and Italy the reward. I should not have thought Austria was so un-German and so unknightly. Even foreign countries, (*The Times*) find it undignified. Even Italy thinks so and is ashamed. Have no anxiety, with God's help we shall fight it out. . . ."

*To the Same.*

" HOHENMUTH, *July 9, 1866.*

" . . . I told you about Wrangel's riding performance and of his getting into Königgrätz, but the fortress has not surrendered. The day or night after we had passed it on Friday, there was an artillery affair worth the telling. On the glacis just below the guns of the fortress, eighteen or twenty cannons had been left by the Austrians. The commander of the artillery during the night sent men and horses who by good luck carried off the guns ; just as they were getting off day dawned, and they were fired on from the fortress repeatedly, but they got away safely. We took a hundred and eighty guns and twenty thousand prisoners at the battle, and it is only from day to day that we are aware of how enormous our success is. No one had an idea of it the evening after the fight.

" The peacefulness of the country through which we drove was touching ; there was not a sign of war, and we proudly said to ourselves how differently it would have looked had it been some hundred thousand Austrian soldiers marching through Prussian territory. We were proud and thankful. Our soldiers behave in an exemplary manner. The people hurry to the road to see us pass. Herds of cattle and geese are on each side, and the villages are quiet and unharmed. . . ."

*To the Same.*

" ZWITTAU, MORAVIA, *July 10, 1866. 3.30 P.M.*

" Our journey here was adventurous, for on driving away from Hohenmuth in Bohemia, we really did not know whether

Zwittau was in our possession or in that of the enemy. Those who arrange about our quarters did not let us know. . . . But it was just possible that the enemy had driven them off, and they might have been unable to notify us. . . .”

*To the Same.*

“ZWITTAU, MORAVIA, *July 11, 1866.*

“We had to remain here to let the troops get on ahead. We had got too near the outposts. May God protect our King. Bismarck is often very anxious about him, and he was when I came in from my walk with news as to our guard, which calmed his anxiety. Ernst<sup>1</sup> is bivouacking with the guard about a mile ahead of us. I have just come from him. He and his company were taking up their night quarters by the side of a wood outside the village. You can fancy what a pleasure and surprise it was to see him. His regiment has done well, and has captured six guns and taken an important position. . . . After dining with the King, his aide-de-camp, Count von Lehnendorf and the Minister came in while we were still at table. . . . We leave this early to-morrow and shall probably be at Brünn, the capital of Moravia the next day. It is some eighteen (German) miles from Vienna.”

*To the Same.*

“ZWITTAU, *July 12, 1866. Morning.*

“ . . . It is not at all likely that I shall be in Berlin yet awhile. The French Ambassador, Benedetti, is here; he arrived last night, and had to share my room, and his secretary shared Keudell's bed. He is not held in special affection, but he shall not do us any harm, nor yet hold us back.”

*To the Same.*

“CZERNAHORA, *July 12, 1866. Towards 7 P.M.*

“Our drive was rather adventurous again to-day, for we did not know whether or not we should be able to get here. We had news while on our way here that the enemy had left in haste yesterday evening. It is only one march from Brünn, the capital of Moravia. Yesterday evening we heard that we had held Prague since Sunday, the 8th, and had found it well supplied with provisions, and the railway in excellent condition. We were well received. You, in Berlin, knew it before us.

“We are in a beautiful country, and staying in a castle of Count von Friesen's, very pretty, but rather close quarters.”

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Ernst von Olfers served as surgeon of the war in 1864, and as Landwehr officer in the campaigns of 1866 and 1870-71.



“Morning, July 13.

“The news last evening was that Prince Friedrich Karl was at Brünn, and my next letter will be dated from there. It is the fifth capital taken by our troops since June 15. I hope to have a few days’ rest there, though I should like to press on to Vienna. It is difficult to decide what is right to do, but I trust the right will happen.”

*To the Same.*

“BRÜNN, July 13, 1866. Evening.

“Here we are really in the old capital of Moravia. Who could have imagined it when we left Berlin? It will be a fortnight to-morrow; a great, grand fortnight, and I have spent it the more happily because I felt you lived it all with me. The thought of you, the association with you consecrates it all. How different it would have been if I had been alone as in former years, and if our quiet home-life with you in it, and with the hope of returning had not formed a background to everything. Now I have a home, and what is a man without one?”

“July 14. Morning.

“Is not our being here wonderful? We are about as far from Vienna as Magdeburg is from Berlin. Fancy if it were the other way. The French Ambassador had to take part in our entry seated in the Minister’s carriage, while Keudell and I were in his carriage. It was an odd feeling. Benedetti was not altogether welcome when he arrived. His impressions cannot be without effect. His admiration at our success is naïve and delightful:—‘Il paraît que les Prussiens sont tellement supérieurs aux autres nations qu’il ne faut pas les laisser devenir leurs égaux en nombre et territoire!’ And in that he shall not hinder us! A delightful testimony all the foreigners with us give to the discipline and humanity of our troops. All signs of war are confined to the small places in which we actually fought. There is complete peace everywhere else. The country people were at work yesterday, mowing, and reaping as we passed the fields. Only our own officers complain that the conduct of our people is not *good enough*.”

*To the Same.*

“BRÜNN, July 15, 1866.

“After carrying out some orders from the Minister early this morning, I attended with much edification the church service out in the open air. The great square of soldiers with the altar in our midst, drums and arms about, the field music and

choir, and our hymn, 'Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott,' and the 'Nun Danket alle Gott,' the King's heroic figure, with head reverently bared, the simple but fine liturgy, was all solemn and affecting, and we are, of course, all high-strung. . . . Paul was not there, he moved off in the night, and probably Wolf and Peter also, as the whole army is advancing again, for the Austrians make senseless conditions about the three days' truce which we were willing to grant so that they might come to an understanding with Italy. The two days' rest has done our troops good and they are all delighted to move forward. How and when headquarters go is not yet settled."

*To the Same.*

"BRÜNN, July 16, 1866.

"You are quite right about Bismarck. I have hardly ever known a man who has such elasticity of thought combined with such iron strength of will. Goethe's saying: 'Faithful to one's aim even on a crooked road' suits him well. And his aim is a great one so we all gladly work with him.

"We heard the guns yesterday on returning from a walk, and this morning came the news of the Crown Prince's little engagement at Olmütz, where he captured sixteen guns. That is what we call a little fight now. One of his generals told me that the Austrians could not stand against our advance anywhere, and will proceed to Hungary. Prince Friedrich Karl's army seems to be doing the same thing and going south towards Vienna. We follow as far as we can to-morrow. The difference in the town yesterday from what it was the day before is interesting. On Sunday evening it was full of Prussian soldiers, and we saw our uniform in all directions when we went out, but there were scarcely any soldiers left yesterday.

"People thronged the beautiful promenades of the Franzenberg including many well-dressed ladies.

"The King asked me after dinner to-day how many times I wrote to you a day. I replied, once. 'Indeed! Not oftener?' asked Bismarck. Now you see I am writing twice to-day. We had tea in the garden with the King. It is a beautiful, large, park-like garden."

*To the Same.*

"BRÜNN, July 17 (?), 1866. 11 A.M.

"We are going to Nikolsburg about five this afternoon. We move slowly and surely, for political and military reasons. I can but repeat that the Minister's prudence, firmness and energy

delight me. He goes step by step, and indulges in no extra strides, to which Moltke, who is so really wise and gifted, is much more inclined. Moltke is certainly the mainspring of all our military operations. He displays equal ability in conception and in execution; he is untiring and always on the spot, not turned aside by personal inclinations, and keeping his work constantly in mind. Greatly as he was admired, no one expected he would prove so really great as he has in this campaign. We all regret that the King did not bestow the Black Eagle on him immediately after the battle. If you see his wife, who has always been friendly to me, present my compliments and tell her how very much we all admire and honour her husband."

*To the Same.*

"NIKOLSBURG, July 20, 1866. Evening.

"... This was another busy day, with all manner of annoyances as well, owing to the French Ambassador, who came to my room several times to await an interview with the Minister, who was first with the King and then with the Crown Prince. I said that I had no time and went on writing, but, of course, he went on talking, very amiably, and often telling very interesting things, but still it was an interruption. He does not lodge in the castle, and could not go down again for the way out is dreadfully far, partly cut into the rocks which make the gateway almost like a tunnel.

"The coming days must bring a definite decision as to an armistice or peace negotiations. The King is greatly moved by opinions as to the decision which must be made, and on which the lives of thousands, indeed, of millions, depend. God will guide him. I have firm faith. Moderation in victory is even greater than victory itself. I am sometimes inclined to wish that Austria may prove unyielding, so that then we shall enter Vienna in triumph, and see the black and white flag flying from S. Stephen's high tower, and another from the Hofburg, (we could see it from here in fine weather), as we saw it from the castle tower at Brünn. If Austria does not give way, it is only in human nature for us to enter Vienna. But then, I say again, it is just in time of fortune, as the ancients said that man should fear the enemy of the gods—Nemesis—or as we would say, he should not boast, and in his happiness, tempt God.

"We Germans are still an incapable people politically. It is incomprehensible why the Small States, or at least, the people of the Middle States, should hate Prussia, (I can understand it

in the Governments), after seeing what power there is in her upright, independent strength."

*To the Same.*

"NIKOLSBURG, July 21, 1866. Afternoon.

"I was interrupted by Benedetti early to-day; he did not, it is true, stay long, but quite long enough, for I had writing to do afterwards. We shall rest here for a few days. We shall make no attack just at present if the Austrians do not. Our army needs rest. We hold the whole line of the Danube, and are giving them a little time to judge whether they can agree about a longer armistice, while negotiations would be going on about peace. You need not have any fear of the Austrians trying any disagreeable practical joke on us. In fact, they are not in a position to do so, and are happy when we do not attack them. It is beyond belief how utterly they are ruined by one battle and our victory. We have to be careful because of the danger of a second war, with France; diplomacy must help us now to avoid this. In future sword and gun will be our stay."

*To the Same.*

"NIKOLSBURG, July 22, 1866.

"Count Karolyi<sup>1</sup> is coming this evening with two other Austrians about the armistice. He must have special courage to undertake the conduct of negotiations, after the tone he took in Berlin. Austria has already agreed to withdraw from the Federation, and to the formation of another to which she will not belong. That is an immense step for Austria. And I must own that it is a great one for Germany, for Austria has hitherto only been a drag. But I cannot deny that I am sorry to see her separation from Germany. One has to give up sentiment in politics and realize things as they are. How un-German Austria is, is proved by recent events, in her attempt to sell Venice to Louis Napoleon after the battle of Königgrätz.

"Our soldiers' advance here is an evidence of their high spirit. Ten men and a corporal were disturbed by some Austrians at the bridge over the Thaya, about a mile distant. They swam the river and came on in their shirts, but wearing their caps, and with their rifles took possession of the town, cheering on reaching the Market Place while the frightened people fled. When they saw that the Prussian savages did not devour those who were left, they speedily returned."

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<sup>1</sup> Count Aloys Karolyi, 1825-1889. Minister at Berlin 1860, Ambassador 1871. Ambassador in London 1878.



*To the Same.*

“NIKOLSBURG, July 23, 1866.

“The Minister is in my room with His Majesty and the Crown Prince. He came in for a moment and said to me: ‘Le Roi repose sur la chasteté de votre lit.’ The French Ambassador and his secretary dined with us, so the dinner was in the Minister’s reception-room. While we were at table the King and Crown Prince were announced and the Minister had them shown into my room. We finished dinner and were having coffee when Keudell, Bismarck-Bohlen, and the French secretary slipped away, but as I had no room to go to I could not do the same, so I remained alone with the Ambassador, who sat on the table dangling his legs and telling stories of Egypt. The Minister came in and out to urge patience. Luckily it occurs to Benemaledetti to write to his wife, and take a walk with the Minister afterwards and have a talk with him. He has run off, and while the royalties are occupying my room I can at least write a few lines to you at the Minister’s table. This is the outside situation, the inner, you well know is always the same. . . .

“I had to make a report to the King this morning just before he received Count Karolyi, the Austrian negotiator, and how deeply I was touched when he said to me that he was placed in a painful position as victor, in receiving Count Karolyi whom he had so often seen in other circumstances in Berlin. I replied that it was a noble and beautiful human feeling, but that Count Karolyi was in a still more painful situation, and we thanked God that it was not otherwise. Yes, he said, but still it was painful to him. It grieved him to be obliged to meet in changed circumstances one who had acted wrongly towards him, especially when he had been in the right. Such simple, manly traits are very charming, and are a link between the King and all who approach him, which nothing can break.

“Yesterday evening he alluded to the past in conversation with Count Bismarck, for the first time, and spoke of his difficult experiences as Prince of Prussia, and of the early years of his reign, and he went on to speak of the rosy sunset which had come to him in his old age, and he embraced the Minister with tears in his eyes. Such an heroic and victorious campaign for a man of seventy, is really wonderful, because such deeds are performed in youth. You have seen the King’s beautiful letter to the Queen in the newspapers, written soon after the battle. It is concise, and so moderate, so simple and devoid of arrogance,

and so exact. It is literally true that 'Bismarck got him out of gunshot' range. The Minister forced him away, for none of the generals ventured to do it. Now you have no cause for anxiety. We are peaceful here, and the people wish us well, besides, there is an armistice. History will praise us for our moderation in not being at Vienna at this time, and it is pleasing to God that we are not there. The Austrians are weak, as all their military actions have proved of late. They are quite discouraged, in spite of big words in the papers, and some manifestoes. They are not able to offer further opposition."

*To the Same.*

"NIKOLSBURG, July 26, 1866.

"The Minister has just come and excited me greatly by a telegram he has sent to Berlin announcing that the King will open the Landtag next week. A sudden decision. As I anticipated this morning that things would be settled to-day, I wished to telegraph to you, thinking you might like to postpone your journey for a few days on the chance of our coming. . . .

"The preliminaries of peace were settled with Austria to-day, and with a moderation which my reason admires, though I feel some regret. But reason, not feeling, must govern political matters, and, after all, when we receive Austria's concessions, we shall have much more than we expected when the war began, or even after the battle of Königgrätz. Real peace needs another campaign.

"Thus Nikolsburg will be the object of our present expedition. I cannot deny that I gaze at the road leading to Vienna, visible for a long way from my window, with some regret, for I should have liked to have seen our brave troops march forward and enter the town. It will be said there that neither Turks nor heretics could enter, but the French did!

"It was almost touching to see Karolyi's depression and melancholy. He used to be so arrogant and hostile. The poor man almost sees his country gone to ruin, but on the other hand, how lucky we are!

"We dined with his Majesty to-day. He was extremely gay and cheerful; all the foreigners, Austrians and French, were present, except Herr von der Pfordten,<sup>1</sup> the Bavarian Minister, who arrived yesterday. After a long dinner I had to translate the Preliminaries into French with Benedetti."

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<sup>1</sup> Ludwig von der Pfordten, 1811-1880. President of the Council, 1864-1866.

*To his Wife.*

“NIKOLSBURG, July 27, 1866.

“Matters with Austria were settled yesterday, as I told you, and we are waiting for the ratification from Vienna this morning. Austria has sacrificed her allies in a manner which is, unfortunately, not without precedent in history. Two tremendous conditions are exacted of her, the withdrawal from Germany, (which seems to me too much to demand), and the recognition of the expansion of Prussia, which will thus incorporate nearly all of North Germany. Otherwise great moderation is shown, for which we will get no thanks, but it is wise, so I am bound to speak in commendation.”

“*Evening.*”

“The ratifications were exchanged to-day, and things are settled. A formal armistice begins on August 2nd, during which we hold Bohemia and Moravia, with the exception of a little strip between the rivers Thaya and Danube. The present armistice lasts until August 2nd.

“We have granted another to Bavaria from that date, and have telegraphed to General von Manteuffel that he is not to try to settle matters by fighting. Herr von der Pfordten came to our bedside at half-past three this morning, greatly upset, having had a telegram announcing the imminence of a battle near Würzburg. He begged and implored us to prevent it, whereupon another telegram was despatched to General von Manteuffel by another wire. . . .”

*To his Wife.*

“NIKOLSBURG, July 29, 1866.

“The King has gone away for three days to inspect the troops, and to give them a chance of saluting him. He only took a small escort. The Crown Prince invited the Minister and his party to lunch at his headquarters, at Eisgrub, a castle of Prince Liechtenstein's. We drove through the pretty, hilly country at midday, for about two miles, and reached a rich, fruitful plain on the March. We took a drive in the park after lunch, and returned late with the Minister *en famille*.

“The Crown Prince was very kind, and asked if I had had news of you, and desired to be remembered to you. On meeting him in the garden a few days ago, he laughed about his recent occupation of my room, and said he had inspected everything after the Minister left, and he will tell you all about it when he is in Berlin, which, of course, he won't do, but I was glad he could not come across anything that might not have been told to you.”

*To his Wife.*

“BRÜNN, August 2, 1866.

“We had a very pleasant journey, I in an open carriage with the Minister. It was beautiful, sunny weather, with light floating clouds, and neither heat nor dust. The Minister was in a good humour, and conversational. He alluded to his changed views of life since his marriage, how foolhardy he had been for no reason whatever, but that since then, he had become more prudent, though he did not shun danger if at the call of duty, or for some urgent reason. He emphatically declared he would not have survived a defeat of Prussia, such as Austria had just experienced. If a battle had been fought near Berlin and been lost, he would never have returned from the field. I understand the feeling perfectly. I believe I share it, although I don't think it justifiable. Thank God that it did not come to that, and that he had no occasion to seek death on the battle-field where it could so easily have been found.”

Abeken's telegram to announce his return did not reach his wife in Berlin, for she had complied with the earnest wish of her father and mother, and gone with them to Megethen, their country place in East Prussia, because of their dread of the cholera.

*To his Wife.*

“BERLIN, August 5, 1866.

“We are expecting the Ministers from South Germany this week, Bavaria, Würtemberg, Hesse Darmstadt, Baden, as well as those of Hanover and Electoral Hesse. We do not treat with Nassau, the north belongs to us. The negotiations with Austria will take place at Prague, under Werther, who leaves on Wednesday. Wesdehlen goes as his secretary. Werther is a very good man for this business; he has tact, calmness and brains for what he will have to do, although he has no initiative. It is a very good thing the Minister is not going, for it is always desirable for the final decision not to be made on the spot, but to be referred to higher authority. I don't think the negotiations will last long, there are few details, for it is almost a repetition of the Preliminaries of Peace. . . .”

*To his Wife.*

“BERLIN, August 7, 1866.

“The negotiations at Prague will not depend much upon the negotiator. Our difficulties lie elsewhere, at home in the annexed



countries, and in those which are now occupied, and in the west, in Paris, where Louis Napoleon is only waiting for an opportunity to take the fruits of our victory from us, if he possibly can. We shall have to reckon with him sometime, no doubt. Meanwhile, I hope we shall garner the fruits as you did the rye, before another storm comes. We shall be ready to meet that day whatever weather it brings."

*To his Wife.*

"BERLIN, August 8, 1866.

"I was busy writing an important despatch until ten last evening, and had the satisfaction to find this morning that the Minister and the King both considered my fifteen pages, hastily written and with constant interruptions, good, and what is more, that the one I wrote this morning, my first work in my quiet home, is also pronounced good."

*To his Wife.*

"BERLIN, August 10, 1866.

"All the Ministers from South Germany are here; Pfordten, Varnbüler,<sup>1</sup> Dalwigk,<sup>2</sup> and Gelzer<sup>3</sup> from Baden, who comes to influence the King privately, for the negotiations some one else will come. Influences are being brought to bear upon the King from various quarters, in favour of the dispossessed Princes, but he remains firm, and is even hard towards the Elector of Hesse. The Crown Prince also stands firm. The campaign and the gravity of the time have done him good, and not the least result, is that he has been drawn more to Bismarck, particularly in relation to foreign affairs, and to German policy.

"I do not believe that Louis Napoleon will make war, at least, not yet awhile, though in spite of all his flattering speeches, for which we pay him back in his own coin, he looks askance at our successes, and does all he can to embitter them."

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich, Freiherr von Varnbüler, 1809-1889. Statesman from Würtemberg.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Friedrich von Dalwigk, 1802-1880. Statesman from Hesse. Acted with Beust and von der Pfordten in the interest of Austria and the Middle States in opposition to Prussia.

<sup>3</sup> Gelzer, 1813-1889. Professor of History, and Councillor of State to the Grand Duke of Baden. Abeken had known him since the time of his residence in Rome.

*To his Wife.*

“BERLIN, *August 14, 1866.*

“Affairs have got clearer by degrees. Peace with Würtemberg was settled last evening, and we are as good as agreed with Baden. Hesse-Darmstadt and Bavaria make rather more difficulties, but as the armistice with these states expires in a week, and as they cannot possibly carry on war alone, and have no support either from Austria or France, they will be forced to come to an agreement. They obtain far too good conditions, but we must consider the future as well as the present.

“The King's plans are still indefinite. I heard yesterday from his Cabinet Councillor, that he is disinclined to go away for his health, nor indeed, to go anywhere, except for a few days' inspection of the army on the Main.”

Abeken was appointed Wirklicher Geheimer Legationsrath, and received in 1867 the Cross which had been created in commemoration of the war.

## CHAPTER II

### JOURNEYS WITH THE KING—EMS—HOHENZOLLERN —BADEN

1867-1869

“ In dem flücht’gen Strom der Zeiten  
Halt !—auf einen Augenblick :  
Ruhig auf durchmess’ne Weiten,  
Dankend, schaut der stille Blick !

In dem flücht’gen Strom der Zeiten  
Fortgeführt von Tag zu Tag,  
Ruhig kann ich vorwärts schreiten,  
Hoffend, was auch kommen mag ! ”

ABEKEN, Berlin, August 19, 1867.

“ Herr, der Du mich führst  
Und mein Thun regierst,  
Ohne Dich kann nichts gelingen,  
Sondern Wollen und Vollbringen,  
Wenn was soll gedeih’n  
Kommt von Dir allein.”

AFTER the settlement of peace between Austria and Prussia, the jealousy of France increased, and war became imminent on the slightest occasion. All political transactions after this had reference to France, especially those concerning the Luxemburg Question.<sup>1</sup>

Then came the decree of Papal Infallibility, and the work relating to this question fell upon Abeken, owing to his theological knowledge.

He was in the immediate entourage of the King throughout this time, and his letters show how unconstrained was the intercourse with which he was honoured by his sovereign.

On July 3rd, the King visited the new provinces, and took a cure at Ems, where his reception was brilliant and enthusiastic. Abeken accompanied by his wife followed the King thither.

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<sup>1</sup> The Question was settled at the London Conference of May 7-11, 1867, and war prevented.

*To Princess Mathilde Radziwill.<sup>1</sup>**"EMS, July 16, 1867.*

" . . . I have nothing but good to report of our beloved King. He is well and cheerful, and Lauer<sup>2</sup> is satisfied with the cure. . . . The Queen Augusta regiment, quartered at Coblenz, was here to be inspected; the men looked superb, and were fresh as if just from barracks. It was refreshing to hear the 'Good morning, children,' in front of our garden, and the response, 'Good morning, your Majesty.' It made a visible impression on the visitors here.

" It is an old story for the King to win all hearts wherever he goes. People here are not accustomed to such unaffected friendliness. He is also full of jokes. The fatigue of the Paris visit,<sup>3</sup> although he himself owns that it was great, has not hurt him at all, while the young Tsar of Russia<sup>4</sup> (who also spoke to Prince Reuss about this), is said to have been much fatigued by the entertainments at Paris, and to have suffered a good deal from them. Perhaps the attack on his life may have contributed to his indisposition. The King told me that he had been particularly pleased at Princess Marie's charming manner in doing the honours at the Embassy ball.

" The assassination of the Emperor of Mexico,<sup>5</sup> it was really a murder, has filled the King and every one with the greatest distress and horror. He wrote from Berlin to the Emperor of Austria, in his own beautiful way, and received such a kind and touching answer, and it gratified him greatly. It is a valuable proof of the relations between the two monarchs. I hope this catastrophe, and Louis Napoleon's responsibility in the matter, will be a warning to the Austrians against the seductions of France. They are much to be feared and scarcely likely to end well. In Paris it is evident that they wish by their reception of the Emperor of Austria, to draw veil over the Mexican affair and their share in it.

" It is to be hoped that the Austrians will not be taken in by it, but will be convinced of the lasting friendship of Prussia,

<sup>1</sup> Princess Mathilde Radziwill, by birth Countess Clary and Aldringen. The letter is about the engagement of the Princess to Prince Hugo Windischgrätz.

<sup>2</sup> Gustav von Lauer, 1807-1887. Medical attendant on his Majesty.

<sup>3</sup> Visit to the Emperor Louis Napoleon during the Exhibition of 1867.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander II. of Russia, was in Paris at the same time as the King of Prussia. A Polish refugee made an attempt upon his life during his visit, on June 6.

<sup>5</sup> Archduke Maximilian, brother of the Emperor Franz Josef of Austria, and Emperor of Mexico since 1864, was shot by order of Juarez, on June 19, 1867.



I am not without anxiety for the future. The Emperor Louis Napoleon does not, it is true, desire war, nor the French people either, but the former must turn to foreign affairs to make his position secure, now after the tragedy in Mexico, which has made it worse than it was. And so preparations for war continue, and it will depend upon circumstances whether or not they will be employed. I hope the Parisians are deceiving themselves if they are counting upon an alliance with Austria. We all hope and wish that the Emperor will not go to Paris, less because of any political contingency, than for the sake of humanity, and we think this is also felt by many in Austria. We have not forgotten that Maximilian was a German, and closely connected with us as a Prince, and though he chivalrously and of his own free will remained in Mexico, he was left in the lurch by France."

*To Herr von Olfers.*

"EMS, July 27, 1867.

"There is a general feeling here that there never will be peace until after a war with France, although every one agrees in thinking that neither Louis Napoleon nor the French desire war. The elements, however, rise to the surface and are driven hither and thither, and though they do not represent the people, and are not dependent upon the will of the Emperor, the result may be that we drift into war.<sup>1</sup> To see our parade at Coblenz the other day, made one's heart jump with joy, and it was hard to resist marching too. The men were so magnificent and so well ordered, added to the proud consciousness of the fact that they were not there for parade only, as a mere show, but that all those troops had known war, and had proved themselves as capable as they were fine to look at. The whole performance for the Half Moon<sup>2</sup> went off well, and was all the more effective because it was so short. The King was rather tired on Thursday, but is quite strong and bright again."

*To Herr von Olfers.*

"EMS, July 29, 1867.

"I was presented to the Sultan by the King. Politics were not touched upon between them. The King expressed his warm sympathy for the Christians, and the Sultan made promises in general terms. He said to the King and Queen in the evening

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<sup>1</sup> "We drift into war," is in English in the text.

<sup>2</sup> The Sultan's visit.

that he hoped Fuad Pasha had correctly expressed his feelings, and he much regretted that he could not personally converse with the King, who, in his graceful way, replied that all that Fuad Pasha said was of a friendly nature, and that he had no doubt but that the interpreter had rightly expressed the Sultan's words to him and to the Queen."

*To Marie von Olfers.*

"EMS, August 11, 1867.

"There have been all manner of interesting events here this week. On Monday we drove to Nassau, with Count Bismarck, Keudell, Diest,<sup>1</sup> and a pleasant Herr Hergenbahn. Old Freiherr vom Stein's<sup>2</sup> house is in Nassau, as you know; he built a tower to it as a memorial of the years 1813-1815, in which he had his study. To stand in that plain, quiet room where the venerable statesman must have often thought over Germany's future, fretted and perhaps sworn over it, but still oftener prayed for it, to stand there with Count Bismarck, the man who more than any other man has carried on Stein's work almost to the end, moved me greatly. It was seeing and hearing in imagination the whole course of our history. The two minds and the two periods meet, the German and the Prussian, 1813 and 1866, and they are, indeed, worthy of each other. We went up the castle hill afterwards, the chateau stands below and on the top is the ruin of the fortress of Nassau.

"On Wednesday Hedwig and I drove to Frücht with Keudell and Diest, the family burial-place of the Steins. It is a splendid vault in a little Gothic chapel overgrown with creepers, and standing in a peaceful churchyard."

*To his Wife.*

"CONSTANCE, Friday Afternoon, September 27, 1867.

"We left by special train at half-past seven, and I was called into the saloon carriage at once and remained there until relieved by General von Tresckow<sup>3</sup> at nine o'clock. I stayed reading the newspapers and chatting with the adjutants in the carriage until eleven o'clock. Then I was summoned again to the coupé

<sup>1</sup> Regierungspräsident at Wiesbaden.

<sup>2</sup> Freiherr vom und zum Stein was born there in 1757.

<sup>3</sup> Hermann von Tresckow, Major-General in 1865, Chief of the Military Cabinet. Adjutant-General to the King in the campaign of 1866.

to Tilly,<sup>1</sup> Lauer retiring, and there I stayed until we reached Basel at one o'clock."

*" Evening, September 27.*

" Political affairs are very quiet. I get very little news from Berlin, which is a shame. The last Messenger brought me letters from Thile and Theremin.<sup>2</sup> There was not much in them, but then they did not have much to write about. Prussian politics are quiet, and the North German Federation absorbs everything. Garibaldi's capture<sup>3</sup> and transportation to Caprera seems to be the event of the moment. But the danger for the Ministry is coming. The Italian Government must consider the national feeling, and take the Roman Question in hand, but what position will Louis Napoleon take? He must consider the Pope and his Roman Catholic subjects, and he must not offend Italy because of his European subjects."

### *To his Wife.*

*" CONSTANCE, Evening, September 30, 1867.*

" This is the Queen's birthday. We are to offer our felicitations at lunch, and we are to dine on the island of Mainau. We drove over about eleven to be in time to present our good wishes immediately after twelve o'clock. She was very gracious and showed me her presents, which filled the room, and pointed out an album of the Radziwill's which contained a photograph of a group in which she appeared standing in the garden. She chatted about different things and also showed us her grandchildren's charming letters, the Crown Prince's children. She greatly surprised me with the announcement of an interesting engagement, and she was, in short, most kind. There was time for a walk in the beautiful garden with Schleinitz and Hartmann before lunch. It was quite delightful to see the King seated next to his children, the Grand Duchess of Baden<sup>4</sup> and her husband, looking patriarchal and beaming with pleasure. You know the unaffected kindness of the Grand Duchess. The royal party drove to look at a fine view after lunch, and we went on the lake in a steamboat with Herr von Gemmingen, the Master of Ceremonies at the Baden Court. At a certain point we took up the royalties and continued our trip. The sunset was beautiful and there was a new moon."

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<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel von Tilly, Divisional Chief in the Military Cabinet.

<sup>2</sup> Privy Councillor.

<sup>3</sup> Garibaldi's second attempt on Rome.

<sup>4</sup> Princess Luise of Prussia.

*To his Wife.*

"CASTLE LINDICH, near HECHINGEN,  
October 2, 1867.

" . . . We left early this morning, at nine o'clock, with the suite, to be at the Castle of Hohenzollern in time to receive the royalties. Then the church was consecrated, and after service an address from the Reichstag was presented by President Simson,<sup>1</sup> and after lunch we saw over the castle. The presentation of the address was not, of course, in the original programme, but it pleased the King to receive it here on Prussian soil, and in the fortress of his ancestors, in the very heart of South Germany. It was especially acceptable because there was a reference to South Germany in it."

"CASTLE LINDICH, October 3, 1867. 7 P.M.

"It was indeed, a delightful day with the King at his ancestral castle. It has been magnificently restored, and the view over a wide country is fine."<sup>2</sup>

*To his Wife.*

"BADEN-BADEN, October 14, 1867.

"The King sent for me at a quarter past ten. I read a special despatch from Herr von Werther to him, in which there was mention of the good impression made by the King's journey in Bavaria, particularly on the childlike mind of King Ludwig,<sup>3</sup> who was surprised at our King's friendliness. These journeys of the King undesirable as they sometimes are for home affairs, are useful in many ways, because of the impression he makes everywhere."

Throughout 1868 there were threatening clouds in the political sky both at home and abroad. The consolidation of the North German Federation was effected with some opposition from the Great Powers, which could not be reconciled to the position attained by Prussia. The Bull summoning the Ecumenical Council for 1869, and the candidature for the throne of Spain created great excitement and occasioned much correspondence.

Abeken's journal bears ample testimony to the large

<sup>1</sup> Eduard von Simson, President of the Reichstag of the North German Federation, 1867-1870, and of the German Reichstag 1871-1874.

<sup>2</sup> The Castle of Hohenzollern, restored 1850-1854.

<sup>3</sup> Born 1845, ascended the throne in 1864.



amount of work which passed through his hands both as to home and foreign affairs, and in how many important matters he was specially called upon by Bismarck to make reports to the King. The despatches concerning Hanoverian affairs and the Luxemburg Question were drawn up by Abeken. But on the whole there was a certain political calm after the war of 1866.

Abeken's wife had a severe illness at the beginning of the year, and his father-in-law had a stroke from which he never fully recovered. In the middle of July the King began his cure at Ems and took Abeken with him. He writes to his father-in-law :—

“ Ems, July 13, 1868.

“ The King's welcome was very hearty, and he was greatly pleased. We sat out in the Promenade last evening, and when he was passing he came up to us as soon as he saw us, spoke very kindly to Hedwig, asked her if she slept well and if the food here suited her. Then he asked after you and if your stay in Prussia was doing you good, remarking that other people left Prussia at this season to seek amusement elsewhere. In short, he was very kind.”

During the King's stay at Coblenz Abeken visited the Rhine district, returning to Berlin *via* Coblenz.

As the King never discontinued work when travelling, he always took Abeken with him, except on purely military occasions.

### *To his Wife.*

“ FLENSBURG, September 15, 1868.

“ With the King on the water all day, and then to Flensburg. There was not half-an-hour for me to spare to make my report.

“ The King went out to the harbour about eight o'clock to see the ships. First to be seen was the frigate, *Thetis*, which Jachmann<sup>1</sup> had commanded in the China expedition. It was inspected in every detail, and the guns manœuvred as is done at a battle. He went to the entrance of the bay in the little steamer, *Adler*, and to Fort Friedrich which protects the bay. A trial was made of the submarines, called torpedoes, which was very interesting, and the display magnificent.

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<sup>1</sup> He commanded the *Thetis* in the China expedition in 1862, and at the naval battle of Jasmund in 1864; was chief of the naval station at Kiel, 1863-1867, and in chief command, 1871-1873. Born 1822, died 1887.

"After dinner to the station in incredible haste, and into the saloon carriage with the King, who retired at once to his cabinet, as he said, 'with his Minister for Foreign Affairs.'<sup>1</sup> My report lasted three hours, interrupted several times by the reception of the King at the stations. When I had done, the King fell asleep, and I went to the saloon and also fell asleep almost at once, in company with the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg, Oberpräsident Scheel-Plessen, and some generals, and we slept until we arrived at Flensburg where the guns roused us."

Abeken spent several restless days going and returning from Potsdam after his return. There were theatricals and a supper for the Tzar of Russia at the Neues Palais on September 27, at which he was present, and at a dinner on the 28th; at the Crown Prince's. The journey to Baden was delayed on account of the arrival of the Grand Duke Alexis,<sup>1</sup> until the 29th, when Abeken joined the King at Potsdam.

### *To his Wife.*

"BADEN-BADEN, MESMERHAUS, *September 29, 1868.*

"My coming with the King to Baden-Baden is all right, for this was the arrangement. The gentlemen were summoned at the last moment and offered their congratulations.

"The Queen was very gracious and showed us all her presents, and among them was some needlework from her grandchildren, &c.

"Count and Countess Flemming were the only guests. The King and Queen and suite with the Count and Countess drove to Castle Brigitten, and I called upon Prince Gortschakoff.<sup>2</sup> I was greatly interested in meeting this all-powerful and celebrated Imperial Chancellor. He is much older than I had thought. He was very kind, has engaging manners, and he conversed on politics. His views are peaceful, but he does not wish us to go to sleep, and is delighted that we don't seem likely to do so."

### *To his Wife.*

"BADEN-BADEN, *Morning, October 4, 1868.*

"Spanish affairs have reached a climax, a Ministry without a Government, and the people sovereign. We may well be

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<sup>1</sup> Son of the Tzar of Russia.

<sup>2</sup> Imperial Russian Chancellor, 1866-1882.

thankful at having so little interest there that we can patiently await the development of events. There appears to be much perplexity in Paris, almost helplessness. The Duke de Montpensier being an Orleanist is as hateful and dangerous to Louis Napoleon as a Republic, while the others have no chance, because there is not one among them with any weight or power. The Republic will fall into anarchy, and then we shall see whether some man appears out of the chaos. We maintain a reserved attitude towards everything.

"Louis Napoleon cannot, of course, contemplate war with Germany while he has this Spanish fly on his neck. He will be obliged to keep armed and on the watch, although he can scarcely venture to intervene in Spanish affairs, or oppose either an Orleanist Government or a Republic. It is possible that things in Spain may tend towards an understanding with him if we do not meet him there with hostility, and show no favour to his opponents."

*To his Wife.*

"BADEN-BADEN, October 6, 1868.

"Things in Spain will develop quietly, or rather in continual unrest, and every one will look on in silence, Louis Napoleon and Italy with rather anxious eyes, we—England and Russia calmly and indifferently as to whether it ends in a Republic, a Dictatorship, a Regency or a Monarchy, while poverty everywhere is sure to follow. May be the right spirit will move them and force its way—it would do so if they were Protestant Christians or would become so."

*To his Wife.*

"BADEN-BADEN, October 11, 1868.

"The Queen was preoccupied at dinner, almost glum, but brightened up afterwards, and became more conversational. She was greatly amused at my anecdote from the French *Karikatur*,<sup>1</sup> '*il attend le verbe*,' and she talked a good deal about *The Life of Bunsen*. What a happiness for a wife to be permitted to raise such a monument to her husband's memory; Bunsen's biography, in any case, would be an important and influential work, by whomsoever written, but for his wife to

<sup>1</sup> An Italian said: "La langue Allemande est une soze (chose) très difficile, il parle tousour, tousour, tousour et on attend le verbe."

<sup>2</sup> *A Memoir of Baron Bunsen*. By his widow, Frances Baroness Bunsen. London, Longmans, Green & Co. 1868.

have been able to write it, was a special good fortune both for husband and wife. This was very pretty coming from the lips of the Queen."

*To his Wife.*

"BADEN-BADEN, *October 16, 1868.*

"We met the Crown Prince at the station this afternoon. The Grand Duke and Grand Duchess were also there, and were very kind. The Grand Duchess asked after you at once, and why I had not brought you with me, and she said it would be very pleasant for you to come next year for Baden was so beautiful. She then asked General von Tresckow and me not to hurry the King away too soon, but to let him spend some days here. I am always glad to see the Grand Duchess. She has such a sweet face, and she looked so bright and well this evening. She had her little daughter with her this morning, a gay, bright child.

"The Crown Prince was as lively and full of fun as usual. He said that I was his authority now and that I had told him three weeks ago that there was nothing of importance going on in the political world, and he repeats this to every one who talks to him about politics, giving me as his authority. He is greatly pleased with his visit to Dresden.

"Thile sent me a letter of Keudell's from Varzin yesterday, and he seems to be worried about Bismarck. He says he is cheerful and well when he is riding, walking, hunting, or looking after the estate, that is, the forest, but the least return to business and public affairs upsets him. Keudell thinks he is not really better, and he does not know what will happen next winter. No one can say anything as to that. I only told the King in general terms that he still required rest. What will happen?"

*To his Wife.*

"BADEN-BADEN, *October 19, 1868.*

"Keudell's letter yesterday confirmed the previous news. Bismarck himself says that he needs a month longer, and I must tell the King this to-day. But he does promise to be at his post if affairs in the Landtag require his presence. Perhaps regular work does him more good than when he attends to things by fits and starts, as he has been doing lately, receiving visits from Prince Reuss, von der Heydt and others.

"The King laughed very much yesterday when I chanced to stand near Lepel and I measured our heights. I said to him that he had use for both tall and short men in his service."



In his letters Abeken constantly mentioned interesting events, such as meeting the poet, Turgenev, and the Dean of Westminster, whom he had known in London. He writes to his wife on his return to Berlin :—

“BADEN-BADEN, *October 22, 1868.*

“ . . . An interesting and striking part of life lies behind me. It has made me acquainted with many interesting people and brought me into the midst of stirring events, and certain not unimportant affairs ; it has given me much to enjoy, and it would be ungrateful for me not to acknowledge this, although there has always been the regret that you were not with me to share it all, and that I had to buy the pleasure at the price of separation from you. Now it all belongs to the past, but we shall gratefully recall this time, for we were not separated in heart, but only bound, if possible, more closely by our love.”

In the spring of 1869 Abeken writes to his friend, Frau Schäfer :—

“ There are all sorts of rumours floating about as to the probabilities of a peaceful summer. Clouds rise in the political sky from time to time and disperse, and no country wishes for war, while all require peace. The needs of countries, in these days, are more important than the desires and caprices of sovereigns.”

This was true in 1869, for the illness of the Emperor of the French caused the negotiations for a Triple Alliance between France, Austria, and Italy to be deferred, and they were finally wrecked by the hesitation of Italy. The friendly reception of the Crown Prince of Prussia at the Austrian Court led to a *rapprochement* between the two countries. Meantime, negotiations, public and private, were being conducted concerning Belgium and Rome, and though peace outwardly was maintained, the newspaper war was virulent.

In June Abeken writes to his friend again on the subject of war :—

“ A favourable majority is expected at the elections, so there will be no occasion for the Emperor to turn the unrest at home in the direction of foreign countries. There is a large party in France, which according to a Frenchman : ‘ brule

d'envie et de crainte de se mesurer avec la Prusse.' Happily we feel just the contrary, and have *ni envie ni crainte de la guerre*, so it is to be hoped that the larger party will maintain a wise peace. Italy also requires peace. If only some of the Chambers, whether they are called Landtag, Reichstag, Parlamento, Corps Legislatif or Cortes, would but act instead of chattering! Ours has been chattering ever since November and will keep on until the end of June."

Abeken was with the King at Ems in July, while Bismarck was at Varzin. From Ems he followed the King to Wiesbaden, Cassel, and Homburg, but on August 23rd he received three weeks leave and immediately went south with his wife. He was in Berlin after his holiday, and then accompanied the King to Baden, returning to his work at the end of October.

He was interesting himself on behalf of the Archiologigal Institute in Rome, and continued his efforts until his death. He also took great interest in the School of Music founded in that year in Berlin, with Joachim at its head.

## CHAPTER III

1870

“When you hear of wars and rumours of war, fear nothing.”—S. MARK xiii. 7.

“And I will walk at liberty; for I seek Thy Commandments.”—PSALM cxix. 45.

PIUS IX. called an Ecumenical Council on June 28, 1868, and in 1869 the dogma of Papal Infallibility was promulgated. The Bavarian Minister-President, Prince Hohenlohe,<sup>1</sup> pointed out the danger of the dogma, alike for Church and State. He was supported by Prussia, but the two greatest Roman Catholic Powers, Austria and France, declined to take any step against it. Count von Arnim<sup>2</sup> proposed having an orator at Rome, but Bismarck thought that neither as a Protestant nor as a Romanist could he obtain any influence, and for very good reasons. There remained nothing but to await the co-operation of some one like-minded to bring influence to bear in this matter. Bismarck's and Prince Hohenlohe's anticipations proved correct, as was seen by the confusion and opposition which this dogma of Papal Infallibility in 1870 called forth from different countries.

The following extracts from Abeken's journal relate to the Roman affair, and to the candidature for the Spanish throne.

### JOURNAL.

January 4. Wrote the decree to Arnim concerning the Council, and laid it before the Minister in the afternoon.

January 5. The Minister read the decree addressed to Arnim at the Cabinet meeting, and sent it down.

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<sup>1</sup> Chlodwig, Prince Hohenlohe, b. 1819, d. 1901. Minister-President in Bavaria, 1866–1870. Imperial Chancellor of Germany. Ambassador to France.

<sup>2</sup> Harry, Count von Arnim, b. 1824, d. 1881. Minister at Rome, 1864. Ambassador at Paris, 1872.

- January 6. Letters from Ledochowski,<sup>1</sup> and Förster<sup>2</sup> to the King. The King replied to Förster himself, altering the German at the end somewhat.
- February 11. Wrote the decree to Munich and Rome concerning Arnim. The Minister approved and signed it at noon.
- March 12. Made my report to the Minister concerning the Order of Council for despatches to Vienna, Munich, and London. Wrote the despatch to Vienna and sent it to the Ministry in the evening.
- March 13. Wrote despatches to Munich and Rome in the morning, and took them to the office about noon. All three came down in the course of the day. The Minister took them to the King. Wrote the despatch to London after dinner, and sent it to the Minister in the evening.
- March 14. Wrote the article for the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* about the Council in the morning, and laid it before the Minister myself. Order to mention a Council at Paris. Despatch from the office about the danger of the Council and its results. Wrote at home the despatches to Paris and London concerning the Conference and had them laid before the Minister in the evening.
- May 2. Benedetti<sup>3</sup> went to Thile on the 28th and 29th April about the conversation with Loftus,<sup>4</sup> concerning the pretended plans on South Germany. Wrote the decree about it to Werther on the first, and it was taken by the Messenger on the second.
- May 3. Report to the King at four o'clock. Concerning Spanish affairs—no decidedly! And the despatch to Rome.
- May 4. Messenger arrived from Rome with Arnim's letter to the Cardinals.
- May 5. Sent the telegram to Madrid this morning. No.
- May 7. End of the Zoll Parliament, a short report to the King afterwards concerning the non-publication of Arnim's letter.
- May 16. Sent Kayserlingk's despatch about Jerusalem to the Crown Prince; it had been returned by the King with orders for it to be given to the Crown Prince on his return from Karlsbad.
- May 17. The King held a Council at one o'clock at which the Crown Prince was present. Allusion was made to his

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<sup>1</sup> Archbishop of Posen-Gnesen.

<sup>2</sup> Prince-Bishop of Breslau.

<sup>3</sup> The French Ambassador.

<sup>4</sup> The English Ambassador, Lord Augustus Loftus.



admirable speech in which he spoke of the King's decision, though against his inclination, about war with Austria in 1866, and the annexation, but which has been blessed by God. The decision concerning the penalty of death for high treason still remains with the King.

June 5. The Minister's order about the decree to Count Bernstorff that matters in France, especially in the army are not so bad. It was sent down on the 7th, admirably corrected and moderate.

June 9-12. Telegrams from Madrid every day.

June 12. Telegram from the Minister, who is now at Varzin, saying that all news from Madrid must be sent on to the Hereditary Prince."

Abeken left Berlin on the 10th in the King's special train. His Majesty took the train at Potsdam and travelled to Ems *via* Cassel. Arrived at Ems on the 20th. There Bucher called on Abeken on his return from Spain.

June 21. To the Promenade this morning to ask the King if Bucher might make his report to him. He did so at ten o'clock. To Bucher afterwards and heard that the King had agreed. Telegram from Berlin. To the King at half-past twelve, who spoke about this affair; he sent his consent to Sigmaringen afterwards. It being too late for more, he commanded me to make my report at half-past five, and then told me that he had telegraphed. He wrote to the Prince and the Hereditary Prince in the evening. Bucher left for Berlin and Varzin at three o'clock.

June 22. The Messenger left for Sigmaringen at eleven this morning with the King's letters, which I gave him myself. Received a letter from Count Bismarck by post. Preliminary reply to it.

*Count Bismarck to Abeken.*

"June 20, 1870.

"DEAR FRIEND,—Herr von Thile overwhelms me with letters which require answers and contrary to our agreement that I was not to be troubled with business while I am without a secretary. He put a lot of ink into my Karlsbad water to-day, as well as a drop of vermouth, by telling me of the King's annoyance at my having negociated 'behind his back,' through Bucher<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lothar Bucher, appointed to a post in the Foreign Office by Bismarck in 1864, and was acting Privy Councillor, remaining there until 1886.

in Spain. This is not the case, and I beg you to explain the following to his Majesty. I have never carried on any international negotiations without his Majesty's knowledge and consent, nor shall I ever do so. Bucher did not transact anything in Spain, but carried a personal message which I was obliged to give Marshal Prim<sup>1</sup> in reply to a private letter and telegram, the contents of which were known to his Majesty. I did not wish to write lest my letter should be submitted to the Spanish Parliament and be there discussed, and I wished it to be, as far as possible, transmitted in such a way as not to create, by our reserve, an unpleasant impression in Spain. It could easily be settled by word of mouth, but was difficult in writing, and Bucher is one of the few who know the circumstances and the personalities on both sides of the Pyrenees. The answer only amounted to this: that the King's Government cannot undertake to bring influence to bear on the decision of the Hereditary Prince, either for or against acceptance, and must, therefore, let Spain await the Prince's decision. His personal inclination must decide, and that without any responsibility on the part of the Prussian Government, and especially of his Majesty the King. His Majesty was informed by me on our return to Berlin,<sup>2</sup> that Prim was waiting for an answer to his letter. That I did not write, but sent a reply through Bucher, was partly to avoid the harshness which a written answer might convey, and partly, as I said, as a precautionary measure against publicity. Bucher's orders were in accordance with the King's intentions, and I have done nothing to merit his disapprobation. I neither expect an answer from Bucher nor from Prim. I have withdrawn from the affair, and do not wish to have anything more to do with it. It has caused me work and vexation enough, though such things are never lacking for me. Thile does not spare me in my holiday.

"I gave Versen<sup>3</sup> the same information when he called on me in Berlin to tell me his impressions of Spain. I asked him to inform his Serene Highness, should he see him, of the state of affairs, as well as of anything further that may arise, but not as coming from me. The Hereditary Prince is old enough to have an opinion of his own, and he ought to treat direct with Spain if he wishes to accept the throne.

"I beg you to make use of the above to set me right with the King, and to free me from the suspicion of having acted behind

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<sup>1</sup> Minister-President of Spain.

<sup>2</sup> The King accompanied by Bismarck went to Ems to meet the Tsar of Russia on June 1, and returned to Berlin on June 4.

<sup>3</sup> Major, afterwards General Max von Versen.

his back. I have written in the short interval between the arrival and out-going posts, and with a burning head caused by the Karlsbad waters. It is quite evident that the Roman Catholic Ambassadors desire to escape from the dilemma in the present phase of the Roman question, by a mean and profitless demonstration, in leaving their stalls in the cathedral at High Mass, although they are in Rome, for fear of seeming to sanction by their presence, that which their Governments disapprove. To do battle for Roman Catholic dogmas on Roman soil, would be for us to attack the Leviathan in the water ; let it come to land, that is, let the dogma take shape in practical religion within the Prussian legislation, and we shall then be masters. If Arnim ostentatiously leaves on S. Peter's and St. Paul's Day, he will alter nothing in the state of affairs, and his coming back will be, in a way, a humiliation which a Roman Catholic can bear better from the Head of his Church than we can from the head of a State. It seems wiser to me for Arnim to ignore the whole fight over the dogma.

"Pray send this part of my letter about Rome to Thile. I am my own secretary here.

"I have been drinking Mühlbrunnen lately, but if I continue to send off twelve letters and three telegrams a day, and to receive a weekly set of questions, I must give it up, and come to Ems where it will be easier to settle matters by word of mouth.

"My best wishes to you, with the request that you will lay my respects at the feet of the King. I am, yours,

v. BISMARCK."

Draft of Abeken's reply to Bismarck's letter of June 20th. Much crossed out and difficult to decypher :—

"EMS, *June 22nd*, 1870.

"I have just received your kind letter of June 20th, and the short time before the post goes out I employ to thank your Excellency most heartily for your kindness and confidence and to tell you that I shall only be able to lay the contents of your letter before His Majesty to-morrow when I expect to make my report to him. I think that Herr Bucher has prepared the way for me to do so. Unfortunately, I only received orders to make the letter known to Bucher after he had gone, but what he told his Majesty was so entirely in accordance with it, I can scarcely regret it. After Herr Bucher's departure and after his Majesty had sent his consent by telegram to Sigmaringen, he spoke to me without showing the slightest sign of annoyance

or at most only towards the Hohenzollern Princes for their vacillation and their present wishes in this matter, and which he has probably expressed in the letter he despatched by special post to Sigmaringen to-day.

"His opinion remains unchanged, though he will not take the responsibility of forbidding them. He also recognizes that Spain has again moved in the affair, which your Excellency confirms. I venture to beg you not to trouble further about his Majesty's annoyance. He is satisfied that the Hereditary Prince will be acceptable to the Spanish army owing to his having fought in the campaign of 1866.

"I do not expect your Excellency to read more than is absolutely necessary, for Bucher will give a detailed report.

"I may write again after I have made my report to his Majesty, and I only add that Herr von Arnim's instructions at Rome contain no difficulties, as your Excellency desired.

"I hope that my best wishes for a speedy cure, expressed in ink, will not poison the Mühlbrunnen,<sup>1</sup> otherwise I will try to let it dry here as far as possible."

#### JOURNAL.

June 23. 1870. To the King about Count Bismarck's letter.

Abeken's second letter to Bismarck in reply to one from him of June 20th, is difficult to read, owing to many erasures.

#### *Abeken to Count Bismarck.*

"EMS, June 24, 1870.

"Your Excellency will not deem it unfair towards the cure to be derived from the excellent Mühlbrunnen, if I shortly state the result of my report to his Majesty concerning your letter. I trust it will not occasion you further trouble.

"From what your Excellency said, I, of course, made verbal use, and his Majesty accepted what I said, as I expected he would, in the best way possible. He said he would write to you himself, but as he does not know when he shall be able to do so, I venture to tell you the following:—

"In the matter itself, his views remain unchanged, as already stated to you and to Prince Hohenzollern. Had he been able to share your Excellency's opinion, he would have advised, even

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<sup>1</sup> The reference to the Karlsbad waters occurs in a letter from Princess Bismarck to Herr von Thile with a warning about not troubling her husband with trying affairs which require his consideration, or else the waters will disagree with him.



demanding that a trial be made, but this he cannot do. He could not refuse his consent as matters have fallen out. He exonerates your Excellency entirely from having acted without his knowledge. Your reply to Prim, which you laid before him after it had been despatched, he considers perfectly correct, and he never doubted but that Bucher received the same instructions. He understands your reasons for sending a verbal message, but if your Excellency had mentioned it to him beforehand, he would have given his reasons for not sending Bucher, who being personally in favour of the offer, could not fail to impress them in Madrid, which would be seized upon as an encouragement to open relations. On the other hand, he understands how difficult and serious a thing it would have been to introduce another person into such a delicate affair. His Majesty, the King, said this without any annoyance towards either you or Bucher. He only jokingly remarked that both Bucher and Versen had returned from Spain quite 'fuddled.' When I remarked that your Excellency had succeeded in carrying out his Majesty's wishes, that he should not be responsible for the decision of the Hereditary Prince, and that the only question which he had to decide was if he should formally forbid the acceptance by the Prince, he replied: 'Yes, if every one but knew how it all has been, and what attitude I took from the beginning! But it will be ascribed to me and to my wishes.'

"He betrayed some slight annoyance towards the Hohenzollern Princes for their hesitation and uncertain bearing throughout the affair. His Majesty told me the whole conversation with your Excellency at Ems, and with the Princes, and repeatedly observed: 'It was only not quite clear to him how your Excellency then knew that the Prince and the Hereditary Prince again desired to accept, as you did not know at that time of the letter to the Crown Prince, for the latter told him you did not. I could only say that the Prince must have let your Excellency know direct. I knew personally that Herr von Thile had the impression that the Prince really did wish to accept, and only yielded when commanded.'

"While I am writing this the Messenger who took his Majesty's letter to Sigmaringen, has returned bringing an answer to his Majesty, and a line from the Prince to me, wherein he begs me to forward the enclosed to your Excellency, which I do to-day.

"I had an audience of the King yesterday, and read your Excellency's statements on the Roman affair; his Majesty entirely agreed, and desired that Arnim should be instructed not

to be present at the solemnity in official capacity, and to abstain from all demonstrations.

June 25, 1870. Made my report to his Majesty this afternoon, and he spoke to me about the Hohenzollern affair and the Princes' letters.

July 3. First telegram from Werther<sup>1</sup> saying that a bad impression had been created by the candidature of the Hereditary Prince of Hohenzollern, and that it would not be agreed to. Evening. Werther's interview with Gramont<sup>2</sup> and Ollivier.<sup>3</sup>

July 5. Werther states that the worst impression prevails. He leaves Paris this afternoon. A telegram sent at seven o'clock ordering him to remain did not arrive in time.

A telegram from Bismarck says that Werther's departure would have the appearance of his having been intimidated, and that this must be avoided.

July 6. Werther arrived in Ems this morning. He has brought his account of his interview with Gramont and Ollivier."

Abeken did not hold the first position, but he was invaluable in affairs, and was an important link between two powerful and leading personages. King Wilhelm as chief of the Hohenzollern family, for which he had warm feelings both as kinsman and friend, could only acquiesce in an enterprise, conditionally, however glorious it might be, and he felt at first a natural hesitation. Bismarck, however, regarded the undertaking more coolly and only from a political standpoint.

It was well known that the Hereditary Prince of Hohenzollern had been offered the crown of Spain several times since 1869, and when Prim endeavoured to obtain the support of Prussia in favour of the Prince's acceptance, he was met with a decided refusal, although the Prince was allowed complete freedom in the matter. When the offer was repeated in 1870 and accepted by the Prince, France had no cause to quarrel with any one except with Spain, and all grounds for war vanished when the Prince withdrew his acceptance. Benedetti's later demands proved

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<sup>1</sup> Karl, Freiherr von Werther, Ambassador to Paris in 1870.

<sup>2</sup> Duke of Gramont, Minister for Foreign Affairs in France, 1870.

<sup>3</sup> Emile Ollivier, head of the Ministry 1870.

that France's action was occasioned by hostility towards Prussia, whose humiliation she desired.

After July 6th, Abeken had no time for his journal. News from Bismarck was to the effect that his course of Karlsbad waters had done him good, and he was, in consequence, in a cheerful frame of mind, but that vast numbers of telegrams which poured in upon him had very ill effects, and he was much annoyed and wished papers were not sent to him which required answering. Another time he said that ink had been poured into the Karlsbad waters by those at Ems, to the great detriment of his health, and he disbelieved the reports concerning public feeling in France. Abeken was obliged to inform the King of the contents of Bismarck's letters, though toning them down, but the King merely smiled and said: "Yes, that is the way with these gentlemen, but no one is troubled at what is poured into our waters at Ems."

When Werther arrived from Paris, matters began to reach the public, and there was a general idea in the King's own circle that something mysterious was happening. The tiny speck on the horizon threatened to break into a thunderstorm. The gay life, however, continued in spite of anxious whisperings and some excitement, but they did not as yet amount to much.

The French were not credited with being so foolish as to seize upon such a pretext for war, and an officer of high rank called the affair a "fire of straw" and a "storm in a tea-cup," but one thing everybody felt assured of: that Louis Napoleon would stir the fire of excitement into a flame of war the moment he knew he held his last card.

Abeken was greatly irritated at the insolence of the French, and before Werther arrived he said: "I am very sorry the Hereditary Prince of Hohenzollern has refused the throne. The only thing for us to do is to unite with South Germany and defy France, or a stain will rest upon our honour."

His work increased at a frightful rate. Numbers of extra clerks arrived, and another decypherer, but notwithstanding all this help, he did not have a moment to himself. The King said he would receive reports at any moment. Immediately after Werther's departure from Ems,

a telegram arrived desiring him to remain, but perhaps it was better so for Germany; often at that stirring time even mistakes concurred in furthering the glorious end.

A nation which thinks so much of ceremony as the French, ought to have had regard to the rule that protects royalties, and they ought to have known the obligation of courtesy and consideration towards them. Even Prussian Ministers did not venture to intrude upon the King during his holiday without special permission. Benedetti, however, came from Wildbad on July 8th, and used his privilege as Ambassador to approach the King.

Abeken's position became more trying every day, and he had never been in such suspense before; he felt responsible for every movement of the King, who calmly went his way undisturbed by passing events. Added to his difficulties, Abeken's official position was not such as permitted him to intervene in order to prevent Benedetti's breach of etiquette, and this made Bismarck's presence more than ever necessary. But he did not come, and telegraphed repeatedly that he was ill, and that people in Paris were nervous. The results proved he could not have acted with greater wisdom and devotion to both King and country. As the King was without official support he dealt with the foreign intruder himself, and this sovereign, usually so gentle, withstood with noble firmness the demands thus suddenly made upon him, and the people flocked to him shouting: "Your honour is our honour!" That showed the real German nation. May it ever maintain that same temper. Such enthusiasm was glorious to behold, especially just at that season of gaiety and worldly pleasures. And when the tiny spot in the political sky suddenly expanded into a mighty cloud, and a dark storm obscured the future, few were able to follow its course, and those few dared not indicate its direction. It was an overwhelming moment. News there was in the papers, but even in the King's circle at Ems, there was no fear of invasion, and the world went its way. . . .

Preparations were being made in Berlin for the unveiling of the statue to Friedrich William III., and the King was looking forward to it with special pleasure. Abeken



received information privately from Switzerland, that there would be an attack on the King's life on that occasion, but Friedrich William III. and his beautiful and unfortunate Queen Luise were to be avenged in another and more terrible way than could have been anticipated. The days appointed for the celebration were the days of battle, and they were kept in the enemy's country. No ruthless hand ventured to strike at the son whom God had preserved to old age.

The King received a telegram on the 12th, announcing the Prince of Hohenzollern's refusal of the throne of Spain, which Benedetti must have known at the same time. He dined with the King, and Abeken felt grave anxiety lest Benedetti's obtrusive conversation might be turned to this subject, and the King's words be misinterpreted so that it might appear as if the King had communicated the fact to him. But the King's wisdom and truthfulness were his best safeguard.

A despatch<sup>1</sup> from Werther made Abeken remark that : "I could not have believed this of poor Werther ; such an end to his career. I cannot take it to the King." Count Eulenburg had just arrived, and he at once consulted him, but the Count not holding the thread of affairs in hand, could do little more than look on while others acted. Still it was necessary and pleasant for the King to have a Minister at hand whose society was agreeable to him at this critical time. Count Eulenburg entirely agreed with Abeken that such a despatch should not be laid before the King, but as the news had to be communicated, they both went to him. Abeken said he had a despatch from Werther which was unsuitable to be laid before the King of Prussia, and that in his official capacity he could not submit it to his Majesty, because he was sure Count Bismarck would not do so. "Then," replied the King, "we can assume that we are private individuals for the time being."

Bismarck telegraphed that it must not be submitted to the King. It was afterwards published in the papers.

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<sup>1</sup> On the 12th July Gramont, after Werther had made his report, demanded a letter from King Wilhelm to the Emperor Louis Napoleon, to the following purport : That he had not thought when agreeing to the candidature of the Prince of Hohenzollern that he thereby touched the honour and interests of the French nation. He ended with the hope that all cause for dissension between the two nations would disappear with the Prince's renunciation.

The famous incident on the Promenade at Ems occurred on the 13th. The despatch which played such a leading part on this occasion, is to be found in a special edition of the *Kölnische Zeitung*, and runs as follows :—

“SIGMARINGEN, July 12, 1870.

“It is definitely announced that Prince Leopold has renounced his candidature to the throne of Spain, for it is impossible for him as a Prussian and German officer, to throw Germany into war for his sake, and to bestow upon Spain, at the same time, as dowry, a bloody war.”

“PARIS, July 12, 1870. *Afternoon.*

“Stocks rising: Rente 69½. It is thought that peace is assured.”

Below this, in Abeken's handwriting, is the following :—

“This paper was given me on Wednesday morning on the Brünnen Promenade at Ems, by the Inspector of Baths, Councillor Baumann. I at once gave it to his Majesty the King, who gave it to Prince Anton Radziwill,<sup>1</sup> to be taken to Count Benedetti, should he be on the Promenade. The latter took advantage of the opportunity to speak to the King, and to make insolent proposals for a guarantee. The paper was given back to me the day before his Majesty the King left, with the remark, that perhaps I might like to keep it as a historical memento.”

The bedroom and sitting-room at Abeken's lodgings were separated by a little passage, and when Abeken's wife was crossing it, she saw Prince Albrecht<sup>2</sup> standing there. He said he had not found any one to announce him, and handed her seven despatches which he had taken from the messenger who was waiting behind him. She quickly looked out those which were to be left,<sup>3</sup> and gave the others back to the messenger. Then she led the Prince to a seat in the garden. She had never seen the Prince in such agitation.

“Is there nothing to be done about Benedetti's insolence?” he exclaimed. “Such excitement might give the King a stroke just now while he is taking his cure. It is a matter of health, indeed, of life to him!”

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<sup>1</sup> Adjutant-General to the King and Kaiser till 1888.

<sup>2</sup> Brother of King Wilhelm.

<sup>3</sup> The colour of the despatches indicated their contents.







The Prince's solicitude was shared by every one in the King's entourage, but the only reply was that Benedetti, as Ambassador, was privileged to approach the King, and that Abeken's position was such as to prevent him from taking any step, however much Benedetti might abuse his privilege. . . .

Among the telegrams was a very long one from Bismarck, which, after it had been made out with some difficulty, was to the effect that Abeken's telegram was too long. This the latter modestly admitted, saying: "Bismarck is right, it was too long, and therefore not clear. I thought so myself afterwards, but I had not time to compose another." Abeken never misunderstood such remarks, but always declared that he learnt something from them, and in later years he was glad that his work required little or no revision.

On July 13th, at 3.30 P.M. he telegraphed to Bismarck as follows :—

"His Majesty the King writes to me: 'Count Benedetti caught me on the Promenade and importunately requested me to authorize him to send a telegram at once saying I bound myself not to consent to the Hohenzollern candidature should they recur to it at any future time; this I declined, and rather sternly at last. One cannot enter *à tout jamais* into such an engagement. I, of course, told him that I had no news, but as he got his from Paris and Madrid sooner than I did, he must understand that my Government was taking no part in the matter.'

"Since then his Majesty has received a letter from Prince Karl Anton. His Majesty had informed Count Benedetti that he was expecting news from the Prince, but, having regard to the above unreasonable demand, his Majesty resolved, on the advice of Count Eulenburg and myself, not to receive Count Benedetti again, but merely to send him a message by an adjutant to the effect that his Majesty had now received from the Prince the confirmation of the news which Benedetti had already received from Paris, and that his Majesty had nothing further to say to the Ambassador. His Majesty leaves it to the decision of your Excellency whether this new demand of Benedetti and our refusal to comply therewith should not be forthwith communicated to our Ambassadors and to the Press."

Transformed by Bismarck the telegram reads as follows:—

“After the news of the renunciation of the Prince of Hohenzollern had been officially communicated by the Spanish Government to the French Government, the French Ambassador in Ems nevertheless demanded that his Majesty should authorize him to telegraph to Paris, that his Majesty pledged himself for all future time never again to give his consent to the Hohenzollern resuming their candidature. His Majesty has thereupon declined to receive the Ambassador again and has informed him through the adjutant that he has nothing further to communicate to the Ambassador.”

As yet there were few rumours of war at Ems, and it was scarcely feared, although the merest outsider felt there was something going on. Crowds used to gather whenever the King appeared, but hitherto they had kept at a distance. Now the crowds became larger and pressed about him, and when Abeken had occasion to speak to him it was difficult for him to make his way through the throng of people, especially in the evening. It made one's heart stand still to see the venerable King surrounded by crowds of strangers, for fear anything should befall him, but King Wilhelm knew no fear, and he was safe in God's keeping.

Early on Thursday morning, July 14th, Count Lehndorff went to speak to Abeken. He looked grave, but said the King intended to remain until the following Tuesday. Abeken who had risen at five o'clock, hastened to the King, only returning at eleven to announce the King's departure for Berlin by special train the next day. The approaching departure was kept as far as possible a secret, but somehow it became known, and the preparations for leaving were continually interrupted.

The King went to Coblenz to take leave of the Queen. He left Ems on July 15th amidst scenes of much enthusiasm, the return journey was made with very different thoughts. Sorrow filled the heart at the possibility of war devastating that flourishing land, but King and people cried: “We put our trust in God.”

At Limburg Abeken was hastily summoned to the King's carriage, whither he went accompanied by the cypher writers.

Countless telegrams full of gratitude to the King for

his bearing towards the French Ambassador poured in, with promises of devotion unto death. The commercial towns offered to advance money, whatever the loss might be.

At Cassel the station was crowded, and it was difficult to leave the carriages during the hour's halt there. The King thanked the people as only he knew how to speak. There was a great demonstration at Göttingen, and for the first time was heard the cry: "Down with the French," "Long live the Kaiser of Germany!" Such great numbers of people clung to the carriages it almost seemed as if their weight would drag them over. The whole journey was a triumphal progress, and even at places where the train did not stop there were closely packed crowds, shouting and waving flags and handkerchiefs.

The cyphering and decyphering went on in the King's carriage, and Abeken and the two other Councillors were kept steadily at work, and as despatch after despatch was finished Abeken submitted them to the King.

There was a touching meeting with the Crown Prince at Brandenburg, and the reception in Berlin was indescribable. Words fail one. The sight of the venerable King, in the truest sense the father of his people, greeted by them who were to give their lives and blood, and their material means, ready to do so with joy, is one to have seen and experienced, it cannot be told. It is given to man to feel such deep happiness but seldom, and the soul rises above earthly things at such a moment, in earnest prayer telling us to believe that in man there is something Divine. The heart rejoices, but there are tears, for highest joy is akin to deepest sorrow.

When the King dismissed Abeken that evening he thanked him in kind heartfelt words for his faithful service at this difficult time, and pressed a small box into his hand containing the star of the Order of the Red Eagle of the second class, encircled with oak leaves. It is a valuable remembrance from the King's own hand of these remarkable days. Abeken never received any decoration that was not in recognition of some definite duty nobly done, from the first one conferred upon him when chaplain at Rome, for his labours during the terrible time of cholera down to the very last. And, on this evening, he

drove through the noisy crowds to his quiet home deeply touched by the gracious act of his sovereign.

The Reichstag met on July 19, immediately after the declaration of war.

Abeken and his wife were together for a fortnight, and the days were spent in receiving and taking leave of soldiers bound for the front. Friends and relations poured in until their home was called a miniature headquarters. One came another went, small items of news were detailed, but silence shrouded all military news. Then a long, dreary time of complete silence followed. An attack by the French on the fruitful Rhineland was expected daily, and Abeken was unable to be much away from the office. Then on July 31st, in extremely hot weather, he left for headquarters. . . . His journal contains the following entry: "God help us and grant us a happy reunion."

*To his Wife.*

" BETWEEN MINDEN AND HANOVER.

" Picture me sitting Turkish fashion on King George's throne, with my writing on my lap. We have the royal Hanoverian saloon carriage for the Minister and ourselves; our King does not care to use it, though it is much more comfortable than his own. The most wonderful thing about it is an armchair with a canopy above it like a throne, placed at the end of the carriage for the poor, blind King. It is now serving me for a seat where I can write to you, and the enclosed card is from Keudell with his best wishes, an 'artistic' offering illustrating the scene. There was an enthusiastic reception at Gütersloh where the young ladies brought us food and wine to the carriage, which tasted very good. They were gratified at our every bite. It was, indeed, touching, when one thinks, as Keudell says, that all their relations were on the field against the enemy, and that they would have liked to give them the refreshments we enjoyed.

" At Magdeburg the King came into our carriage just after I had written my card, shook hands and asked me if I had been decyphering again, and presented me to the Minister and Prince Karl as 'General,' and talked about the journey from Ems to Berlin. The stir had begun then. I ventured to observe that we had all been very glad at his Majesty's calmness. 'Yes,' he said, 'I was quiet then, but the last days in Berlin were very trying and disturbed. Frequently I could not sleep at night, and when I woke up, my mind was filled with all manner of dark



thoughts. It was very trying ! ' But Count Lehnendorff says he slept well last night, and now that the agitation and excitement of Berlin are over, he is strong and bright again.

" I spoke to General Moltke at Magdeburg yesterday evening. He was very calm but bright and full of spirit ; he could not get over the ill-advisedness of the French in declaring war, a fortnight before they were ready. He thought the war party had got the better of the Emperor, and he would not have decided upon war if his ships had not been burnt behind him. Count Bismarck thinks that the Emperor would have given another turn to things when the two armies had faced each other, by proposing peace and to make laws for the astonished world by means of these immense united powers, had not our publication of Benedetti's official statement made this impossible."

" MAINZ, *August 2, 1870.*

" . . . Good morning a thousand times from this first point of our journey. How long we are to be here no one can say. First of all, we are charmingly established, Keudell and I with the Minister except that Count Bismarck is too far from the King. We are in the highest part of the town, and have a fine view over all the smiling Rhineland.

" Although we arrived at Köln two hours before we were expected, the railway station, the squares and streets, and the Domplatz were full of people. We all said we had never experienced anything like it. The hurrahs swelled and thundered unceasingly for the King, for Bismarck and for General Moltke. It was such an uproar that one could not hear one's own voice and we could not understand how the people had a sound left in their throats. It was incomprehensible how room could be made even for the King. Such jubilation and enthusiasm before the fighting has begun is almost alarming. The thing which was pleasantest for me to hear was : ' If need be we will follow you.' It came from weatherworn old fellows, as well as from the young ones. The illuminations at night made the scene extremely picturesque ; there were crowds of people at the station, on the roofs, up the trees, and all lighted by Bengal lights."

" MAINZ, *August 3, 1870.*

" . . . I begin another greeting to you at once, making use of this moment, while the Minister is still asleep. So far as one's private affairs are concerned, it is comfortable that the Minister has such incredible sleeping powers by day, but it is less so for public business. It is half-past ten and there is no

sign of his waking. He is amusing beyond anything one can imagine, and in his rosiest humour, and fascinated our host, the rich wine merchant, Kupferberg, rousing his patriotism, &c. At half-past ten I had to urge a break up of the party. We breakfasted in the garden whither our host came. He has been one of a deputation of the Parish Council of Mainz who went to the King, and was quite touched by his firm bearing, and calm, earnest words.

"While I was poring over a long telegram to London, a Messenger, accompanied by a gentleman,<sup>1</sup> was announced, both with despatches from London, but escorted by a gendarme! Our railway and field police had been so clever as to fancy they were French spies, notwithstanding they had despatches from Count Bernstorff, and one of the gentlemen was a King's Messenger, and their papers were all right. Of course, I made the *amende honorable*, and did what I could, but unfortunately, much loss of time had been occasioned.

"There is no talk of our leaving this place. The King may go with a small suite. Keudell, and Bohlen go with the next military expedition. Pazienza! Every man at his post."

"MAINZ, August 3, 1870.

"I am really quite uneasy that this war has begun with so many comforts. It would be pleasanter for them to come after the war, and after intolerable exertions, and I can truly say that I am sorry to have them now, more sorry than I can express. We are still inactive here, that is, the sword is inactive, not the pen, for there is no lack of writing to do. No news of any serious engagement; the enemy does not advance, and our iron tooth has not yet penetrated anywhere.

"Meanwhile we live in the midst of telegrams and despatches."

"MAINZ, August 4, 1870. Evening.

"Just as I was about to write to you the Minister came and dictated a letter to the King of Bavaria. I had made a draft of one, but he said no one could make it out because of his many corrections, unless he dictated it to me. I must own he did it very well, and I do not regret the quarter of an hour which he took from my letter to you."

"9.30 P.M.

"The first news of victory has come! A brilliant but bloody victory is announced by the Crown Prince at Wiessenburg; the

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Edward Malet, afterwards Sir Edward Malet, British Ambassador at Berlin.—TR.

French division under General Douay has been obliged to leave their camp equipage, and five hundred prisoners and a gun are in our hands. General Douay is dead. On our side General Kirchbach is slightly wounded. After I had written the other page and the Minister had gone with the draft to the King, I went by moonlight on the terrace in front of our house, with Keudell, our host joined us and spoke of the enthusiasm of the town over which the news had spread. On the whole he told it quite correctly. We hurried up to the high balcony of the house to see the Bengal lights and hear the music of 'Heil Dir im Siegerkranz.' We saw the Minister drive up and hurried down to meet him, and heard him say as he sprang from the carriage: 'We have won.' Then he read the Crown Prince's telegram to us, and now they are in the garden and I must go down and touch glasses in celebration of it, only I had to tell you first."

" 10.30 P.M.

" . . . Hitherto we have been without news, knowing only that the enemy had taken Saarbrücken, an open town which we never wished to defend. Three Prussian companies had been quartered there for a fortnight with orders to retire at the approach of the enemy. This has happened and a great victory has been celebrated at Metz! The Crown Prince has taken the initiative further south, and with the Prussians and Bavarians under his command, taken Weissenberg and the Geiss-Berg on French territory. I am greatly delighted that the first victory has been won by the future King. He is now advancing. General Steinmetz is pressing down from the north, and will soon use his iron teeth. Will this hasten the King's advance? Plans have been altered three times to-day."

" MAINZ, August 6. Sunday, 2 A.M.

" Fancy my fright on being wakened by seeing a light and hearing steps, and then finding Lehdorff and Alten<sup>1</sup> by my bedside with a lantern. 'Where does Bismarck sleep? It is too great a fraud.' For God's sake, what has happened, I thought. They came with news of a victory by the Crown Prince which I would not believe at first, thinking it really humbug. About eleven the King received congratulations by telegram from the King of Bavaria, and next a touching telegram from his daughter Luise, without understanding to what it referred. Late at night a telegram from the Crown Prince which began with:

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<sup>1</sup> Freiherr von Alten, aide-de-camp to the King.

'Two eagles, six mitrailleuse, 4000 prisoners,' but without particulars of the event or the circumstances which led to it.

"Probably there was another and earlier telegram which has not reached us. Now in the middle of the night I hear the hurrahs from the town."

"HOMBURG NEAR THE WOOD,  
*Monday Morning, August 8, 1870.*

"We steamed away from Mainz at ten yesterday, going up the Rhine to Ludwigshafen, opposite Mannheim, turning westward towards Kaiserlautern. There we met Keudell and Hatzfeldt with some of the Headquarter Staff on the platform. They had preceded us, and had only just arrived and thinking we would stop at Kaiserlautern, had engaged us excellent lodgings. But, although the King's Quartermaster was not ahead of us, we went on, to their envy. Thus we fell like a bomb on the little country town of some two thousand inhabitants. The Crown Prince of Saxony was there, and now quarters had to be arranged for the King and Princes, the Grand Duke and Hereditary Grand Duke, and all the rest of us. The town was flooded with the most glorious evening glow, gilding hill, wood and town. I never saw anything more beautiful. The King was lodged at the district office, and the Minister at a farmer's. We, that is, I, Dr. Ludwig Bamberger, (a very much respected political individual, with decidedly National Liberal views, who was brought from Mainz with us, as he can be very useful), were quartered on a Jewish family.

"Towards nine o'clock I dined with the King in the garden of the house, and there was sheet lightning all the time. A telegram arrived while we were at dinner, from the Crown Prince, with details of the pursuit of the enemy after the battle of Wörth, and from Prince Karl about the occupation of Saargemünd, &c., which were read aloud. The Minister gave me some orders after dinner, and I was only able to look at the things from Berlin which arrived meanwhile.

"I am not giving you any news because you get it before we do. The news of the battle of Wörth must have reached Berlin on the evening of the 6th, and we were only wakened up at midnight to hear it. The King told me yesterday that the first news he received was from his daughter, Luise, whose touching congratulations he did not understand, and thought they related to what had occurred the same day, the little fight at Saarbrücken. Then the telegram arrived from the King of Bavaria who was at Schloss Berg, and one from the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg, all of which were utterly incomprehensible. Towards midnight



one came from the Crown Prince with its announcement of the capture of two eagles, &c., but also unintelligible. They only showed that a battle had been fought which must have been a victory. Finally one towards morning arrived, and at half-past four in the afternoon the one which had gone astray, arrived. He said the first news would have come from the Queen if he had read her telegram aright, but which he read thus: 'You may be proud of the affair.' But he only discovered next morning that he should have read it: 'You can be proud of your son.' He would have known then that something had taken place. So you see that you in Berlin are better informed than we are.

"Bismarck sees that the news is made public, and torments our cypher writers more than is necessary."

"SAARBRÜCKEN, August 9, 1870. *Evening.*

"Here we are in the town which the French made such a fuss about having taken, and which they boasted of having made it a *monceau de cendres*, and which, of course, we believed at first.

"The town is quite comfortable and well-to-do, and we have not found a heap of ashes. The French saw that there were three companies of infantry and two squadrons of cavalry so they hardly ventured to enter the town, although from the heights beyond the Saar, they fired into it and set the railway station on fire. Then they retired and entrenched themselves on the heights half-an-hour distant. Our brave troops attacked this entrenchment on the 6th, the day of the battle of Wörth, with, I must say, as much stupidity as skill, and with brilliant success, but with frightful and unnecessary slaughter. All the staff officers in the first storming line were killed. Easy work for the French from their entrenched position. The 40th and 74th and the King's Hussars have suffered dreadfully. Our troops aimed well, and it is extraordinary that the most severely wounded are the French.

"We visited a hospital on our way here to-day, in the little town of St. Imbert. There were many Prussians and Frenchmen. How the faces of the former brightened when the King went in, and spoke to them. Count Bismarck distributed cigars and newspapers. It was a heart-breaking sight.

"The nurses were the Sisters of Mercy from Trier. The country people had brought in fifty-eight waggons filled with wounded from the field of battle. While the fighting was going on the schoolboys in the village carried water to the wounded

The villagers went on the field to bring them in, and there is scarcely a house in which there are no wounded.

"We are living again as if in Paradise. Our host is a rich man, owner of a coal-mine and smelting-house, a Herr Haldy. Our hostess and her very pretty daughter assure us that they calmly sat at coffee in the garden while the enemy's shots whistled overhead, and that they had gathered them up afterwards. They are untiring in their care of the wounded, but are just as kind to us well people."

"SAARBRÜCKEN, *Wednesday Morning, August 10, 1870.*

"It was not very comfortable at Homburg, but what was that in comparison with the sufferings of our poor soldiers out in the pouring rain? The Saxon Army Corps defiled past the King and Crown Prince of Saxony for nearly three hours yesterday morning; smart and clean, capable men and excellent horses, hurraing loudly not only for their Crown Prince, but also for our King.

"Everything is quiet again this morning, while yesterday presented a most warlike, animated scene. The first thing was the long march past of the Saxon troops and of a few Prussian, then our departure from Homburg. We drove off at twelve o'clock, I in the carriage with the Minister. Another followed with the cypherers, and our cart of provender. The day was mild and slightly overcast, fine air and no dust, and the country hilly and richly wooded. Camps were frequently seen, artillery issuing from the forest, and from the fields the smell of cooking, while an endless number of troops were disposed on both sides of the road, all looking bright and jolly. Now and then one of them recognized Bismarck and hurrahs broke forth, lasting until we had gone a long way onwards. It was a melancholy pleasure to see the laughing faces of those young fellows, forgetful of their privations, labours and dangers, in their enthusiasm for their country and gratitude to the Minister, who had in some measure brought on the war.

"We halted to water the horses between Homburg and Saarbrücken, where we were overtaken by Moltke who was driving Stiehle.<sup>1</sup> The latter, Chief of Staff to Prince Friedrich Karl, had come from French territory to speak to Moltke, and was in the best humour. Everything was going on excellently with his part of the army. Then the King caught up with us. The forester's daughter, wearing a wreath of roses, presented a

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<sup>1</sup> Major-General in the King's suite in 1870-1871. Divisional Chief of the General Staff.

bouquet to the King, but handed it first to Bismarck by mistake. The King looked very well ; he said he had waked up in the night and could not get rid of the dark fancies which attack him at night. The great losses distress him, and next to the soldiers' own people, he must feel them most deeply. The march past brightened him up."

*" August 10. Evening.*

" I have prepared a despatch rather hurriedly, perhaps too hurriedly, and Count Bismarck may possibly desire me to write it differently. That, however, does not matter. I did it in a hurry so that I might drink my tea in spirit with you."

" But I must not, indeed, forget our poor soldiers, who have been camping out in the wind and rain since the afternoon. I pity man and beast, and can scarcely enjoy being under cover myself. The Minister has just returned my draft with some alterations to be made in the fair copy.

" You see I set down the fleeting impressions of the moment, quite forgetting that they only reach your hand when they have become events of the past.

" I dined with his Majesty to-day. It was interesting to listen to the talk about the battle of Saturday ;<sup>1</sup> it was not such a great battle as that won on the same day at Wörth, by the Crown Prince, but it was one of the most brilliant but unwise battles. Every one who was out on the heights this morning, (they are about half-an-hour from the town), is unanimous in thinking that there is not another such difficult position as this one ; the steep hill, where the French are entrenched under cover of a wood, is like an unassailable fortress, and our soldiers took it by storm, equipped as they were after their seven hours' march. The regiments present were the 39th, 40th, 48th, and 12th.

" The French are beside themselves. They did not think it possible for such a position to be taken or even reached. Our tremendous losses will be made up to us by the enormous and overwhelming moral impression which this deed of arms has made upon the French.

" Meanwhile news has come from Paris, part of which is difficult to understand, but it looks like the end of the Napoleonic dynasty, but will it be of the war ? One can't say what will and can take place in France. We learn to-day that the Ollivier-Gramont Ministry which is responsible for this mad war, is obliged to resign as 'incapable.' If this had been recognized a month ago, what might have been spared !"

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<sup>1</sup> The storming of the heights of Spicheren.

## CHAPTER IV

### IN THE ENEMY'S COUNTRY

1870

"Cast all your care upon Him, for He careth for you."—1 PETER v. 7.

"ST. AVOLD, *August 11, 1870.*

"My first greeting on French soil! We left Saarbrücken directly after dinner and crossed the frontier some half-mile from where our splendid troops repulsed the enemy a few days ago. It gives one a peculiarly proud feeling to be in the enemy's country. Our journey from Berlin has not been so rapid as that of 1866 when we crossed the frontier the same evening, but I hope we shall obtain more than we did then. We are all right in this little town, St. Avold. Keudell and Hatzfeldt have a large room near mine, and our office is not far off. The clerks did an incredible amount of work to-day, and deserve the highest praise for the energy and unselfishness with which they did it before we left Saarbrücken in time for the Messenger to take to Berlin. We got here at four, and I am taking time to write to you; there is nothing to do as the Minister has gone to the King, and the writing of the French Proclamation belongs to Count Hatzfeldt's department.

*"Evening.*

"I have just had a nice little walk with Keudell and Hatzfeldt to the top of a low hill where there is a field outpost. The view is fine; the town is in a valley in the midst of woods and meadows, the woods extending a long way. . . . The clear evening sky was beautiful. We watched a troop of Uhlans riding towards us.

"Most of the rich and educated inhabitants have left, and those left are not unfriendly, not from goodwill or regard for a kindred race, but because they are afraid of the countless bayonets. German is spoken everywhere, and one scarcely grasps the fact that one is not on German soil. It is, indeed, solid German land, and where the language has not ceased to be used, nor German life in essential points prevailing.



*"August 12, 1870. Morning.*

"We slept with only one eye last night, as we have advanced rather incautiously before ascertaining whether we have a sufficient force ahead to make it safe or prevent Bazaine, who is in command at Metz, from making a sortie. The officers of the General Staff laugh at this, because we have a large cavalry force in advance, one quite adequate for our protection. And with all his daring, Moltke has to keep the King from being exposed to danger. So nothing has happened, and we are neither frightened, troubled, nor made prisoners, but are well and cheerful and amused at the spectres we conjured up last evening. But we are careful not to get separated in the enemy's country, nor scattered about in different houses, but insist upon keeping together. The Minister desired this on account of the work, for he has sometimes been enraged at our splendid but scattered quarters.

"There would not have been an end to the war with Louis Napoleon's fall. He has not fled to England, but left the army and retreated upon Paris. . . . It is a matter of indifference to us whether a Napoleon, an Orleans or a Dictator is at the head; we are fighting France, and her power and prestige must be completely broken for years to come at least. The French are just what their rulers force them to be, and by flattering their vanity and love of power, they are induced to attack their neighbours. This must be made impossible."

*"ST. AVOLD, August 13, 1870.*

"We won't be arrogant, but rather humble from the depth of our hearts. The Emperor's chief power is not broken yet, so pray for God's blessing on our work, and for the labours of the pen. Our principal task is to keep our enemies at a distance, and all those who envy our deeds of arms and would despoil us of the fruits of our bloody work. Count Bismarck is incomparable, indeed; his thought about details is inexhaustible while he is steadfast in the pursuit of his object. Now and then something unnecessary is done owing to haste or pressure, but it does not count. Nothing is carelessly neglected, and as a rule his marvellously sharp insight enables him to do the right thing. But apart from diplomatic action, many indispensable things would be felt undone were it not for his wonderful initiative and his thought about everything.

"Yesterday passed off quietly. Our troops are all moving forward, the Crown Prince is marching south towards Nancy, and the other two armies are advancing towards Metz, and

ahead of us. Enormous numbers of German troops are before us. The French are in Metz, and will probably hold a strong position behind it."

"FALKENBURG or FOULQUEMONT.

*Saturday, August 13, 1870.*

"... A separation has taken place, and Bismarck is with the King at a little village an hour distance from here, and took his cousin, Carl Bohlen<sup>1</sup> with him. The rest of us are here with Prince Carl and the other princes. It is an immense comfort that the Minister cannot come in from the next room every moment with orders, and has to send a mounted messenger in to us when he wishes a telegram sent off.

"I received your two letters by messenger last night, but various other things came as well which had to be attended to before the Chief awoke. This occurred much too soon for my comfort, but scarcely too early for the work. Then there was a great deal to do as the Messenger had to be sent off to Berlin and another to the Crown Prince and a gendarme back to Saarbrücken about a proclamation which is to be printed, translated by Count Hatzfeldt into very good French.

"The Minister wished to have his little cousin in the carriage with him, and as I wished to ride, I rode hither with Keudell and Hatzfeldt in two hours and a half. We passed vast masses of men, animals, and waggons, artillery now and then, and columns of ammunition or commissariat waggons and regiments of infantry. It was an intensely animated and interesting scene."

"FALKENBURG or FOULQUEMONT,

*August 14, 1870. Early Morning.*

"Just as I was going to bed last night, Stieber<sup>2</sup> came from Herny where the Minister and the King are stopping. He was the bearer of messages of distress from the former calling for his office. A second orderly with a second complaint and a batch of telegrams in cypher arrived during the night. I can only regard this distressing situation in a tragi-comic light, and picture the Minister with his undecyphered telegrams. The consequence of it all is, that he desires us to come to him as soon as possible, and he will look out lodgings for us.

"A war with France, being a national war, it cannot come to an end in seven days after one or two battles. The chief considerations are military. I fully believe that not merely is another

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<sup>1</sup> Carl, Count Bismarck-Bohlen, cousin and private secretary to the Chancellor.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Jur. Geheimer Regierungsrat, Chief of the Field Police, 1870-1871.

battle necessary, but that it must be a great and decisive battle, and if we are victorious, they have no other army to place in the field, and without an army, the most embittered nation cannot carry on war. But then there is the diplomatic campaign which must be carried out to the end in the enemy's country before we leave it and return to our dear home. Bismarck will require all his skill and energy to be moderate, that is, not to demand too much, nor yet too little. France must be rendered harmless now and for a long time to come. But our so-called good friends will come and say: 'Leave poor France with a black eye now, and the loss of a Napoleon, and rest content with an Imperial throne for Germany and all you have there already,' To the devil with all such good friends, they shall not succeed!"

"HERNY, *August 14. Midday.*

"The French are in full retreat it seems. We have looked for them for three days in vain. Metz being a strong fortress will hold out of course.

"I am particularly pleased that you regard the future so calmly and are so calm too about the hard fighting. There is still much to be done, and I cannot understand how people can be so impatient. They were spoilt by 1866."

"HERNY, *August 15, 1870.*  
*Afternoon.*

"We were alarmed before six o'clock to-day. I was afraid that we were to retreat, but it was, on the contrary, to advance. It was only a reconnaissance, from which we have returned. I rode from 6.30 until 3.45, nine hours in the saddle. You may feel satisfied with your husband, it was good work both for horse and man. I am now in a hurry to make a memorandum for the Crown Prince.

"We rode early; the King and the Minister, (the latter attended by his cousin), and a few others, drove some three miles, the rest of us rode, then we joined the King on a height from which the whole country could be seen. We distinctly saw the great Cathedral of Metz, and beyond were the retreating French army amid clouds of dust!"

"PONT À MOUSSON, *August 16, 1870.*  
*Tuesday Evening.*

"This was an arduous day, not of work, but from the heat of the sun, and such dust as I hardly ever experienced. We had

to drive slowly nearly all the way alongside of the columns, infantry, cavalry, and the ammunition and commissariat carts, for four or five hours. We stopped to rest and water the horses half-way. If only there had been some shade! We are all the more comfortable now we are here in a nice house. It has two wings and a courtyard in front, the surrounding walls of which are overgrown with creepers which reach up to the windows. I am in one wing and Count Hatzfeldt in the other, while the Minister with Keudell and Count Bohlen occupy the middle *corps de logis*.

"Colonel Willisen walked through the most horrid dust to speak to Count Bismarck on the road, so the latter was obliged to stop, rather *contre cœur*, in the midst of all the dust, for he could not let the commander of a regiment run beside his carriage."

" *Wednesday Evening, August 17, 1870.*

(For the family).

"After such bloody fighting as that of yesterday,<sup>1</sup> you will all be doubly glad to know that I spoke to them<sup>2</sup> the day after, although you will read a good deal in the newspapers. Indeed, it made us all as happy as possible. The King and Bismarck drove to the field of battle at 3.30, some three miles distant from here. There they mounted their horses. We rode slowly after them leaving at 4.30, and arriving long after them, and found the King and his suite without any difficulty. We heard many horrible details of the fight as we rode, and learnt that the Dragoon Guards and the VIIth Cuirassiers had been in the thick of everything, and that Max's IIIrd. Uhlans had also been in the fight. I looked everywhere for the Red Uhlans, and met a few. My heart beat whenever I saw one. I learnt from one of them that Max was with the IIIrd squadron, but the first man to whom I spoke did not know him. Just as we drew near the King, a cavalry regiment, or rather the few who were left of it, rode past, and one's heart bled at the sight of them. Then a tenth of the Cuirassiers passed, then the Dragoons, only enough left of the two regiments to make one regiment. It looked like only one squadron. Good Lord! The Red Uhlans followed. When they had ridden past his Majesty, I signed to the Captain, Count Hardenberg, and hurried towards him, asking: 'Is a Count Yorck in your squadron? Is he

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<sup>1</sup> The battle of Mars la Tour, August 16.

<sup>2</sup> Count Max von Yorck and Fritz von Willisen, who was engaged to Countess Margarethe von Yorck.



alive?' 'Yes, he is well and will be passing here directly.' Just at that moment some one sprang from the other side, it was Fritz Willisen, and holding out his hand he said: 'There is Max. Max come here.' He fetched him from the ranks. Max shook hands and I called out to him that all his people were well and that I would send them news of him. With that he had to go on. They wheeled aside at once, and went off to encamp and get some food. But as I had to stay with the King we were separated. Fritz Willisen had to go to his Prince.<sup>1</sup> Max looked well, though his face was covered with dust and smoke so that he was scarcely recognizable, and he was very much sunburnt. When Willisen told me how quickly Max mounted another horse when his own was shot under him, he laughed heartily. I looked him up afterwards at Gorze, a large village south of the battlefield, and found him fetching water with a patrol. We could only exchange a few words. After his having survived by the mercy of God, such a terrible day as yesterday, we need not be anxious for a while. The Third Army Corps, to which his regiment belongs, fought with such heroism, that it must have a rest for a while. It was decided to-day that it should remain encamped where it was.

"These happy moments were saddened by the cries of agony which one heard everywhere. Some regiments had lost half of their officers. The sixth company of the 11th regiment had not one left. The commandant of the Red Hussars, the Ziethen regiment, a cousin of Keudell's, is at Gorze with a serious wound in his thigh. Grüter of the White Hussars has been shot in the wrist, and Kleist, of the Dragoon Guards, adjutant to Prince George, is dead, also Prince Reuss, and Count Wesdehlen, a young married man. Colonel Auerswald is dying! The King called out good morning as I came towards the front, and said in a sad, shaking voice: 'A horrible sight!' We shall be all the more thankful to God for having spared our people."

"PONT À MOUSSON, *August 18, 1870.*

"The Minister drove off again this morning at four o'clock with the King. The rest of us stayed behind, as duty did not call us, Keudell, Count Hatzfeldt and I; we could not drive, and our horses were not able to go a third time as on the 15th and 17th.

"The 16th is also a glorious page in our history of this war. The third Army Corps went first with the cavalry in the morning.

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<sup>1</sup> Prince Friedrich Karl of Prussia.

It attacked the enemy with incredible bravery in a most unfavourable situation, and held out until the infantry could come up, two hours later. One Army Corps and part of another were confronted by three, Canrobert's, Frossard's and L'Admirault's, and a part of the Guards. The enemy tried in vain to force them back, but those brave men held out for six hours against the murderous fighting of all three Corps. It was a cannonade from the long-firing chassepots and terrible mitrailleuses. Those present declared that Königrätz could not be compared with it; it was like a hailstorm beating on the ground for hours, and when a mitrailleuse strikes everything falls beneath it! There were six companies of the XIth regiment without any officers, and at last battalions had to be commanded by non-commissioned officers. The Cuirassiers were decimated in their attack on a battery, but there was neither hesitation nor yielding. The Xth Army Corps came up at five o'clock at the moment of greatest need, and with part of the Guards rushed forward. The French were well commanded and fought well. The cavalry fought with unheard-of determination as the infantry was too weak. Hussars and dragoons rode the squares down but they rose up behind them and fired under a frightful hail of grapeshot and mitrailleuse. Our artillery did brilliant service, and the French were driven towards Metz about dark, just as we had desired. Our victorious army took the heights commanding the road between Metz and Verdun, and these last stand with their base on Paris, while their enemies have theirs towards Berlin, so General Stiehle called out to me as he rode by. How could we do better?

"... When we rode towards the King yesterday, Count Bismarck had just ridden off with his cousin Bohlen to an encampment of dragoons about an hour's ride from us.

"His sons were in that frightful battle. You can fancy how our hearts trembled, and how we looked at him on his return! Meanwhile, I had been fortunate enough to see Max and Fritz, and I wished more ardently than ever that God would be merciful to our Chief. After hours of waiting Bismarck-Bohlen returned. The Chief was told at first that his second son, Wilhelm, was dead, but this was incorrect; on cutting his way through a square his horse had been shot under him and he had fallen, but got up and went forward, and his father met him safe and sound. The eldest son, Herbert, he found at a farmhouse at a distance, Mariaville; he had received a slight wound in the thigh; the bone was not grazed, the ball passed out and the wound is not dangerous."

“ *Evening.*

“ We are still full of hope. We only know that no fighting was expected this morning, though the cavalry was ordered forward at 11.30, and an officer sent here from the field heard violent cannonading begin shortly after. Towards six o'clock General Chauvin telegraphed from Gorze that the battle was in our favour, and the field telegraph was ordered forward. We also knew that the King was on the scene at six o'clock, and we thought he would have come on here this evening. After that it seemed as if the enemy's connection with Paris would be threatened. We shall not know anything for certain until the King and the Minister return, or, though it is not likely, we may be ordered to follow them.”

“ PONT À MOUSSON, *August 19, 1870. Morning.*

“ There was fighting again yesterday, but I was not there ; we have no details, and only know that the battle was ours, and that the King and Minister stayed all night at a village near the battle-field, which is a good sign. We are going to drive out with some food for them, as they probably have little or nothing. You see I can't remain behind.”

“ PONT À MOUSSON, *August 20, 1870.*

“ Many lives were claimed the day before yesterday.<sup>1</sup> It was a glorious victory, but a hard fight. The result is great. The flower of the French army is shut up in Metz, cut off from Paris and the interior of France, and we are on the road between them and Paris, the outcome of the two bloody days, the 16th and 18th. The 16th was the most terrible. Yesterday was a bad day for news of a most painful kind reached us.”

Wolf von Yorck was killed at the battle of Gravelotte, that is, he died from his wound a few days after it. Abeken only heard on the 20th of his having been wounded, and as he was on duty he could not obtain any news until he despatched a man to inquire, when he heard that the wound was very serious, if not hopeless. As soon as he could be spared, he got a carriage with much difficulty and drove to Ste. Marie aux Chênes. He wrote to his wife before going:—

“ I must end my letter suddenly for I have to go to the King.

“ He was very kind and sympathetic when I told him where

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<sup>1</sup> The battle of Gravelotte.

I was going. He was much moved and knew not how to rejoice at a victory bought at such sacrifices. He is thankful that he went into the war with a clear conscience. He pressed my hand kindly and warmly and I nearly lost my self-control."

"COMMERCEY, *August 23, 1870. Afternoon.*

"Our campaign takes another departure to-day. We are now with the Crown Prince's army.

"We left Pont à Mousson in an open carriage at ten o'clock, the rain pouring down. We walked up a long, long hill with Moltke and others of the General Staff, all of whom were of good courage. All has, indeed, been bought with many sacrifices, but the success is very great. The French army was prevented from retiring on Châlons on the 16th, and beaten from all its threatening positions on the 18th, cut off from connection with Châlons and Paris and shut up in Metz. Our wounded all speak triumphantly of this result and never of their sufferings."

"BAR LE DUC, *August 24, 1870. Afternoon.*

"We made but a short day's journey hither, and are lodging in the principal street opposite to the King. On the garden side there is a wonderful ringing of bells, and from the street side of the house the beating of drums as the Bavarians march by. We are here with the Bavarians, but we only saw their camps along the road. They received the King here, and they have the outpost and sentinel duty. It seems odd to one.

"Still stranger is the news we heard on our journey, that the French have evacuated Châlons, and our cavalry under Prince Albrecht is in possession of the town. The position cannot have been as strong as we thought, but I am surprised at their retreating so far, because of the moral effect on Paris.

"*Evening.*

"I had to go to the King after his tea with a message from the Minister. There were eight Princes with him.

"In a way this has been a lively day. The Bavarian bands have been playing from morning till evening, it being King Ludwig's name-day. They waked us up by playing before the King's house; then one Corps marched through the town in the morning and another in the afternoon, and there was a loud fanfare as each regiment passed the King's house. There was music at dinner-time, and again at tea-time which attracted half the town out on their legs. In short there has been no end of it.

"The last three days have presented sad pictures of the



war which had been agitating us all last week. We have now advanced, and have only the gay part of camp life. The wounded are not here, nor have we seen any for three days, as the Crown Prince's army has done nothing but advance. Between Pont à Mousson and Commercy we saw no troops. Since Commercy we have been with the Bavarians. There are more of them than the Minister imagined, for he had not thought they were so many."

"BAR LE DUC, *August 26, 1870.*

"I am delighted that you are looking forward to peace with such courage. I have no doubt but that the neutral Powers are quietly intriguing to rob us of the fruits of our victories, and to protect France. But they shall not succeed! If ever anything was the work of God it is here, for in weakening France we are trying less for our own aggrandisement than to secure peace. I told the Minister what you said in your letter as to the universal feeling being that the blood spent could only be paid for by the recovery of the old German territory, and not with money, and by a lasting peace. There is, of course, much moralizing about it, which is subtly answered by Bismarck."

"CLERMONT EN ARGONNE, *August 26. Evening.*

"An orderly of Prince Friedrich Karl's has just brought me a letter from Fritz Willisen telling me he left Wolf's death-bed at ten o'clock last evening. He died calmly and without pain, at half-past six. I cannot say anything about it now except that God has taken that dear, true, pure soul to His eternal rest! How much love and hope have been carried down into his grave! I dare not think of it. And I can but say that my comfort is in your love. God preserve you to me."

"CLERMONT EN ARGONNE, *August 27, 1870. Evening.*

"We are quartered in the school-house here, *tant bien que mal*, and all the Office is with us. General Moltke's office and that of the General Staff are in the two school-rooms. We stay on here to-day, although we are far less comfortable than we were for the last two days at Commercy and Bar le Duc.

"We dine with his Majesty to-day."

"CLERMONT EN ARGONNE, *August, 28, 1870.*

"It appears that we are to remain here to-day. The troops are concentrating hereabouts, and we may rest satisfied at the work to be done. I never thought there would be an end at the first defeat of the French, but I did think they would have hastened to get rid of the Emperor when a Republic would try its strength. And, in fact, this is the case. The Emperor and

his authority are set aside, no one bothers about him. Ministers and Generals do what they like, but in his name as a matter of form for lack of any other flag under which they can act."

"BUSANCY, *Wednesday, August 31, 1870.*

"Orders came on Monday night that the King would leave yesterday about ten o'clock, all the other gentlemen were to ride. This did not, however, exactly happen, a good many drove, but we were obedient, and soon after nine o'clock rode away from Grandpré towards Busancy whither the King wished to ride. We are just now engaged in following the French army in a northerly direction; it keeps on avoiding us and not stopping when our advanced guard appears. . . . A great Council of War was held here at Busancy, then we rode and finally drove off for about an hour and a half, when the King mounted his horse and rode with the whole suite to a height whence there is a wonderful view for many miles over the country. There is a place, Sommauthe, you will not find on your map, but you will see Beaumont, about a mile north-east of us. This was a point for surveying the strategical operations. We saw the enemy from there, and I for the first time, at a respectable distance, some miles off on the line from Stonne to Beaumont.<sup>1</sup> We saw his columns, and batteries, and our troops, in a hollow before us, the batteries had opened a violent fire towards Beaumont, (which the French still held, and which soon began to burn), and also firing on the distant French batteries on the heights above. We saw and heard the French batteries as the enemy came on, and could discern distinctly the fire of the mitrailleuses, and the French shells crash through the air. It was a solemn and magnificent spectacle and without any possible danger to us, for the fighting was more than a (German) mile away. We could watch at a mile distance the fire of our troops, and their gradual advance. Then we saw the advance of our infantry against one of the bare heights held by the French. They did not meet the attack, and after a few shots withdrew their batteries along the whole line. We soon had notice that Beaumont was taken and our troops advancing along the Meuse. It was our right wing. The Crown Prince advanced by degrees on the left towards Stonne, to surround the French. This is the first fighting I have seen and is probably the last. The success is striking. The French are in full retreat. News arrived in the evening that fifteen guns and from three to four thousand prisoners were taken, or possibly more."

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<sup>1</sup> The battle at Beaumont, August 30, 1870.

## CHAPTER V

### SEDAN—STAY AT FERRIÈRES

1870

“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and shall not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.”—ISA. xl. 31.

*To his Wife.*

“VENDRESSE, September 1, 1870.

“The Minister left with the King at three o’clock. Count Hatzfeldt rode with them. Keudell and I stay for work.

“*Afternoon.*

“I have been attending to orders which the Minister gave me before he left, after half-an-hour’s discourse in the market-place: and now, I can go on with my story.

“The Minister sent Count Hatzfeldt and me back to Busancy with some work so we could not watch the Crown Prince’s attack. The King and the Minister returned shortly afterwards. We found excellent quarters.

“It is a magnificent sight to see a battle, the artillery work especially, when one can do it without witnessing the horrible details of dead and wounded. But one is almost ashamed of looking on at a safe distance.

“While the King and Prince Karl were sitting down and the other Princes and ourselves were standing or lying about, there were two funny intermezzos. One was when a hare was roused by the adjutants in a potato-field. The Minister ran after it and brought it to the King, and it remained hidden under Prince Karl’s cloak and chair until he had it removed to a distance where the horses could not tread on it. Then there was a sudden discharge of musketry on the slope below us, and every one ran off in alarm to return highly amused. A Bavarian regiment had discharged their muskets before cleaning them. In the dark it might have caused a fine fright.”

“*Thursday Evening, after 8.*

“A great battle has been fought at the front a few miles off—While we have been quietly here. I finished work in the morning and the first part of this sheet, and in the afternoon Keudell

and I went to a neighbouring height where our outposts are stationed. We heard the distant firing of the infantry and saw the smoke of the burning villages, but a wood prevented our seeing more. News has just come which we believe to be true, (it is now eight o'clock), that we have won a brilliant victory, and that the French army with the Emperor at its head, has laid down its arms. The King and Minister will soon confirm this, and if true, it is too bad that Keudell and I were not present. We were tied to our work. After all, it is better to be at one's post than to witness the greatest event if not called there by duty.

"The King has just come back at nine o'clock. The Minister has sent for us to follow him to Donchery."

"DONCHERY, *Saturday, September 3, 1870.*

"No possibility of writing a line yesterday, or of sending a Messenger.

"It was a great day, almost unique in the history of the world. An army of some 100,000 in the morning surrenders with its Emperor to our King in the evening, after a loss of 30,000 in prisoners and 20,000 in killed and wounded, leaving a remainder of between fifty and sixty thousand to surrender. That we, Keudell and I unfortunately missed the sight of this battle, you see from these sheets. But the great thing is that all personal interest is forgotten, or, at any rate, shall be forgotten, in gratitude to God for the great event.

"I was lucky enough to be able to congratulate the King on Thursday evening, the first, which could scarcely have happened had I seen the battle. I made the Minister's sudden departure the excuse for asking for further orders, and found the King at supper. He made me come in at once. He was greatly moved and said: 'Yes, you may put it in your archives, it is an event unknown in the history of the world.' But there was no trace of exultation or bravado. I observed that it was an embarrassing situation; what was to be done with the Emperor and where was there a Government with which to treat? What might happen at Sedan to-night? Would the soldiers murder their officers and the Emperor also? The King was very happy and thankful, of course. That God should have permitted me to have such an experience!!! I shall never forget the warm pressure of the King's hand when he dismissed me.

"We drove on here that night and found the Minister asleep, but Count Hatzfeldt was busy translating the conditions of the capitulation. I went to bed and was wakened on Friday morning, the 2nd, with the news that the Minister had suddenly gone to



Sedan, and that the Emperor was at a farm close by. I hurried out and have actually witnessed the unforgettable sight of the small Emperor Louis Napoleon's interview with Bismarck in front of the cottage. It was a strange moment when the Minister's tall figure bowed to the Emperor. Some of the General Staff only were present. It was the first time I had seen the Emperor.

"An officer was sent to Sedan, for the Emperor, being a prisoner, could not act for the army, and very glad he must have been to be out of reach of it. The capitulation had to be settled with General von Wimpffen,<sup>1</sup> the officer highest in command. He made difficulties, and the bloody work might have recommenced. Ten o'clock was the hour fixed for a decision, and towards that time General von Wimpffen himself came to Fresnois, the little garden-house, whither the Emperor had been conducted, and Moltke settled matters with Wimpffen, and brought the news to the King. It was then a striking sight when the King appeared, the heroic figure of our venerable King and the crushed Louis Napoleon.

"I have written this in pencil in the courtyard, for I wish to retain a vivid picture of that momentous scene. We rode off with the King across the field of battle at three o'clock to see the delighted troops. It was an intoxicating ride, and we only returned in the rain at eleven at night. We go back to Vendresse to-day and remain there for a while."

"VENDRESSE. *Evening.*

"I was very sorry not to have seen the battle of September 1st, and also seen General Reille present the Emperor's letter of surrender to the King. Yesterday was a great historic day, and the Minister approved of all I had done.

"We are here again where we were on the 1st, and we really ought to have a day's rest, but it is settled that we move on to-morrow morning. The Emperor goes to stay at Wilhelmshöhe, Cassel.

"Before leaving Donchery this morning, we breakfasted with the Crown Prince who invited me to touch glasses with him. He had had a long interview with the Minister, who said in a pleased tone: 'There is much in him.' That was a good hearing!"

"VENDRESSE, *September 4, 1870.*

"We have all often wished we could be in Berlin for a short time to behold the rejoicings, and the first moments of surprise. Have you really believed it was all true, or said to yourself that it was too improbable not to be true?"

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<sup>1</sup> He took over the command of MacMahon's army on September 1st, and signed the Capitulation.

“RETHEL, *Monday Morning, September 5, 1870.*

“We are at a large place now, capitally settled in a handsome house with stately rooms built round a courtyard. We drove the five or six miles from Vendresse to this place yesterday. The weather was superb.

“The King conferred the Iron Cross on Bismarck yesterday, and drank to the three, to Roon, who sharpened the sword, to Moltke, who wielded it, and to Bismarck, who has shown them how to make use of it.”

“RHEIMS, *September 5, 1870. Afternoon.*

“Can it, indeed, be the Cathedral of Rheims, that magnificent building which I see from my window, where the Kings of France were crowned? Such victories make this a momentous time!

“It is a fortnight to-day since we were at Bar le Duc on the road to Rheims when we on Saturday suddenly turned northward to Clermont, then to Grandpré on Monday, and so on, always going north. Our skilful stratagem has turned the heads of the people in Berlin, for I see from the newspapers they thought we would leave the French army in the north, and march on Paris as the allies did in 1814. Instead of surrounding the French army, the last they have, we have taken it! After the performance of this victorious feat with as much brilliant heroism as strategy, we are now at Rheims, in ten days, victors and masters, the French army and Emperor behind us, it is true, but as prisoners.

“RHEIMS, *Wednesday Evening, September 5, 1870.*

“After giving my letter into the field-post, I went with Keudell to see the Cathedral, and think it wonderful. The façade was flooded with the most glorious golden light of the setting sun, a splendour for which there are no words. The Cathedral is infinitely grander than I had imagined, and is undoubtedly the most beautiful Gothic Cathedral I ever saw. We found it no less grand and beautiful inside. Some Prussian officers were at their devotions before the altar, the altar where the Kings of France were crowned! It was a moving sight!”

“*September 6, 1870.*

“It is incredible how Bismarck thinks of everything, and even when he gives unnecessary work sometimes, one feels that on the whole, it is very fortunate that he takes so much trouble, for otherwise, many important things would be left undone.

“The battle of Sedan on September 1st, has been an astounding event in the world's history, and with all the personal sorrow,





THE CROWN PRINCE OF PRUSSIA ON THE BATTLEFIELD OF WÖRTH

*(Sketch by Count von Harrach)*



I do look forward to your letter of the 3rd, which will bring me an echo of Sedan."

*" September 7, 1870.*

" I took a long walk with our Pressman, Dr. Busche,<sup>1</sup> after dinner. We went first to the highest triumphal arch of the Romans. I am sending you a photograph of the Cathedral. Take special care of the paper in which I enclose it, for it is a copy of a drawing which Count Harrach<sup>2</sup> made of the Crown Prince at the battle of Wörth. He gave it to me to-day. Take care of it.

" No letter from you to-day. The King has also complained of not receiving one from his wife since she got the news of the great victory, only a telegram telling about the delight in Berlin. I can well imagine you did not believe the news at first. It sounds so incredible, so impossible. It was said at the King's to-day that sixty generals and six thousand officers were taken. Who will not fancy that there is at least one cypher too many? We, even, are still stupefied and cannot realize it."

*" September 8, 1870.*

" The Emperor is at Cassel, Lulu<sup>3</sup> is in England, but we do not know anything at all about Eugénie.

" We have just learned that which we expected after the first defeat, the fall of Louis Napoleon and his dynasty, and that a Republic has taken its place in France. I always thought they would wage a desperate war against Germany, but do not be alarmed, they cannot do anything. With such gangs as they have at their command they cannot carry on war against a regular army, but only against the poor defenceless Germans in France. The cruelty with which they were driven away seems now, almost an act of humanity, for if they were there still they would all be murdered, in the large towns, at all events. As Bazaine was driven back with a bleeding head on the 1st, he will soon become amenable."

*" Friday, September 9, 1870.*

" We shall stay here two or three days longer, until the army has marched up. Meanwhile things are boiling and bubbling in Paris, and that it continues quiet there is praiseworthy so far. Necessity holds the people together. We are calmly awaiting further developments, and for a Government to arise with which we can treat. The only mandate at present is, that of the

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Moritz Busche of the Foreign Office Press bureau.

<sup>2</sup> Ferdinand, Count von Harrach attached to the King's headquarters.

<sup>3</sup> Louis Napoleon, born 1856, was killed in Zululand in 1880.

Parisian mob, and that, of course, counts for nothing. In a way it is embarrassing that there is no one with whom we can negotiate, though we have no occasion to negotiate, but to conquer, and settle the law so far, at least, as we are concerned. They can then begin about their own affairs, as soon as they like. It is a great advantage, politically, that the neutral Powers have no representatives in Paris who can take part against us ; no one with French sympathies upon whose neck they can fall. So far they are silent, and won't know to whom to turn.

"It is extraordinary to have had no news, not an echo of the victory at Sedan ; it is because of our lack of messengers. Fancy the last letters received on Monday were dated a week ago to-day, but since then nothing has come, and we have no accounts as to how our victory was received."

*"Sunday, September 11, 1870.*

"How strange it is the way news is carried ! The King's important telegram from the field of battle never reached Berlin at all. It was sent to the next station, and Bismarck took every care for it to be the first one sent off, indeed, the only one sent that evening, all private telegrams were forbidden, and yet, the telegram is returned from the office after some days' delay, while all the time, we were wondering why it was not published. The matter has not been cleared up. The Queen got the first news from a telegram sent by Count Eulenburg to Count Seherr Dobrau, despatched from Varennes, probably going there direct from the field. I think the two telegrams were confounded, and instead of returning the Count's, they returned the King's ! The Queen got the King's on the 2nd, written just before his meeting the Emperor. You would have had the news much sooner, perhaps on the evening of the 2nd. Varennes, the next telegraph station, is fully six miles from the battle-field."

*"Evening.*

" . . . You rightly call the King's letter to his wife beautiful. It is so simple, so clear, so modest. God gives victory to the humble. I have never once detected a sign of exultation, not even the same evening when I had the good luck to see the King. As for public curiosity concerning his conversation with the Emperor, it must remain unsatisfied, for it will not be divulged. We may rest assured that it was merely a polite exchange of phrases, and the King, with his humane, refined feeling, would have been more moved than the Emperor. You need have no fear that the latter will escape from Cassel, even

if he had no guard. He is delighted to be there rather than at Paris, but it would have been pleasanter to us had he been in Paris, for then we should have some one with whom to treat. This seems impossible with the rabble now at the head of affairs, and who can say if they will be at the helm to-morrow, and in how many parts of France the Government in Paris will be recognized. Each person must find this out for himself, meantime, we must be outside of Paris. In my opinion, the military part is over."

*"Morning, September 12.*

"The Minister is sometimes very difficult to get on with. The worst thing is when he will not listen to plain facts brought before him. Things he ought to know, and sometimes will not know them. I often cannot help laughing at him and myself, after the first vexation is over. I always wish to give an answer exactly to the questions asked of me. Very often he does not reply at all, or answers something quite different, not listening to what is said, only thinking of what he wants to say; it is frequently quite unintentional, but often, very often, quite intentional. He strikes hard sometimes, which I deplore, for people get blows they don't at all deserve. But again, he is right, and it is more important what Bismarck says, than what the other desires to hear. This is just the needful element in his greatness, enabling him to go straight at his object without heeding others, often with iron energy and by very oblique, indeed, by very crooked ways. One easily forgets all personal annoyance and forgives it because his great qualities have made him the instrument of God.

"I was not for a moment troubled at his displeasure at my marriage.<sup>1</sup> I knew it could not affect my service, and in my complete happiness, everything ran off me like drops of water from a good mackintosh cloak without being perceived by me. You can fancy our talking of all this among ourselves occasionally, but the end of the song is admiration of the great powers of the man whom God has made His instrument. You know how amiable he can be. The one feeling here is exultation at our success, and gratitude to God for it."

*"Later.*

"I returned from the King somewhere about half-past ten, and found Bismarck, Keudell and Hatzfeldt still at tea. We chatted about various things, and I looked again at the newspapers, although I had discussed them when at tea at the King's. A

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<sup>1</sup> Bismarck had disliked the idea of Abeken's marrying.

Messenger arrived from London just before I left, and brought a packet of French newspapers from Count Bernstorff. There were monstrous things in them to be sure; proclamations, decrees of the new governing body, full of empty phrases, and foolish things about the treachery of the leader by whose means only, the French army had surrendered. They give a picture of the chaos which now reigns in Paris. There was also a mad article on the conditions of peace, which 'Guillaume dans la conversation avec son miserable vaincu' had proposed, but which the Republic would not certainly venture to repeat. The King said: 'We did not, of course, speak a word about politics, still less about the conditions of peace.' General Boyen<sup>1</sup> tells all manner of things concerning his journey with the Emperor, and how much surprised he and his party were at the dignified bearing of the people during his journey through Germany. He also mentioned that the Emperor would not believe that we had no mitrailleuses, (a good proof of the firing of our infantry), and he was also convinced that we had had balloons, 'mais je les ai vu, les ballons.' He said he thought that the clouds which had been caused by the French bombs, were balloons. It appeared so to me at the battle of Beaumont."

"RHEIMS, *Tuesday Morning, September 13, 1870.*

"The Empress Eugénie has not gone with the Prince to Cassel. It is humanly speaking not nice, but is politically useful; in England she will work against any sympathy which may be excited in favour of the infant Republic, such as is at work in the Republican party in Spain, and which will be felt, of course, in Italy also.

"I see that you too have misunderstood the King's proclamation, as has been done by many newspapers in England, and as the new French Government seems to do, as if we had only declared war against Louis Napoleon and his dynasty. No, the King did not wish to say that, and we have neither thought nor felt that. No, we are warring against France and the French, against the nation, and we demand from it and from the French, a guarantee for a lasting peace, not a guarantee from any chance Government. The mere change of figures on or near the throne makes no sort of difference. Let them govern themselves as they like, but we must render them harmless for ourselves and for Europe."

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<sup>1</sup> Hermann von Boyen, Adjutant General to the King. See *Recollections of an Adjutant General to Kaiser Wilhelm I.* By Hermann von Boyen.



“RHEIMS, *Tuesday Evening, September 13, 1870.*

“We are advancing again and our tea-parties will cease. I am delighted to be moving again and to get out into the open air. Our chief discomfort at Rheims of late, was caused by the tension after the weeks of excitement; also by little disputes between the authorities, encountered mostly by Keudell, and which did not fortunately affect me much. I am glad the King lets such things pass unnoticed. If Bismarck could only have something of his calmness! His is a great nature, but not a royal one. Perhaps it would have been such had he been trained to rule.”

“RHEIMS, *September 14, 1870. Morning.*

“When the King came to tea yesterday evening, (he must have had a frightful clearing up of his papers), he said: ‘When one has been a week at a place, it is almost as if one were leaving home.’ In moving about as we have done these last weeks, seldom spending two nights in the same place, it seems almost like a regular settling down to have made a stay of ten days, as we have here. Where shall we be this day week?

“I think I have not told you a good joke about our ride that evening at Sedan, in connection with ‘not knowing whither.’ It had got dark when we parted from the last of the soldiers, and so rapidly, that it was hard to see the man in front of one. We still had several miles to ride, not only to our quarters, but to the place where the carriages were waiting for the King and his suite, and no one was sure of the road. A short one led through the fortress of Sedan, but it was not desirable to pass that witches’ caldron of 80,000 prisoners of war, a disorderly mass who were raging at the imprisonment and at their officers whom they would no longer obey. So we rode round Sedan, pretty much at random, sometimes by the short cuts, sometimes by the high road, or on the hills, lighted up by the miles of bivouacs. We were obliged to stop and have a light to look at our plans. This must not be repeated, for it was unwarrantable to have let the King take such a ride. The officers of the General Staff had remained behind owing to work, and there was no proper guide. No one, of course, had an idea that the King would ride after dark, and we expected to have accomplished it in two or three hours. The King had been riding five or six hours, and the rest of us for more than eight hours. We found the carriages towards nine o’clock, in an utter *melée*, for every one was on foot or horseback round about them. The King had dismounted, while we stayed in our saddles, calling out to one another lest we should get separated. At last Count

Hatzfeldt, who was near me, asked in great irritation : ' Where is the King going to ride ? ' and a good-humoured voice replied with a laugh : ' I should be very glad to know myself if you could tell me,' which we immediately recognized as that of the King himself. He was just in front of us without our knowing it. He had not lost his temper. Then he got into his carriage, and the rest of us followed with the Minister, having still about an hour and a half to ride. That was the worst part of the whole day, for we had to keep up a short trot not swerving either to the right or left, and having to pull up occasionally so as not to over-ride the man in front of one ; the Minister was in front of me. It was not pleasant, but got better at last when the King turned towards Vendresse, and we had only half-an-hour's ride to Donchery on the broad high road, where one could give the horse his head, so we revived.

" I am afraid the King's detailed account of his conversation with the Emperor, and the ride to the troops, sent to the Queen, has been lost with the lost postman. It's a pity, but the King will regret it less than the loss of the man."

*" Saturday, September 17, 1870.*

" You are right, the fight begins for us paper-warriors now ; the stormy petrel has begun to fly. May God grant that after the support he has given us and done so much for us, we may act with wisdom. I have confidence in our King's really royal manner of thought, the ability and skill of Bismarck, the force of things, and the German people aided by the grace of God, Who has begun and will continue to guide us.

" It is politically bad, but human for us to act honourably and well towards Louis Napoleon. He is not a bit more to blame than the whole country, towards which we shall be firm and hard you may depend upon it. I am writing a stiff despatch which would please you."

*" Evening.*

" It is a quiet Saturday like the quiet week which has passed. Our troops are marching forward to Paris, already surrounded by our cavalry. There may be something decisive next week, but not necessarily, if we don't act hastily, and don't sacrifice life uselessly. There is a sort of presentiment at standing before this modern Baby'on. The French call it the sacred town, almost blasphemously. Our papers have done well in publishing Victor Hugo's mad call, ' Aux Allemands.' It is extraordinary, but sad how the wretched liars and writers in Paris have caused a panic, almost a superstitious fright at the

hordes of wild Germans. The inhabitants of villages on our route, have nearly all fled to the woods."

"CHÂTEAU FERRIÈRES, *Tuesday, September 20, 1870. Evening.*

"As we have sent a telegram to Berlin to-day, I may venture to tell you that I have seen the great Jules Favre.<sup>1</sup> He has a very clever but not attractive-looking head, which is too large for his figure. His beard, whiskers, and the hair on his head are greyish. He seems clever but is not like an energetic revolutionist. He came from Paris yesterday, and the newspapers will have told you, and as I wrote you, that the Conferences yesterday turned on our readiness to treat with any Government which will be obeyed in France. Whether the interview has led to anything I don't myself know; meanwhile, M. Favre has returned to Paris. Our military operations, of course, continue.

"The Minister was asked on Sunday evening if Jules Favre could speak to him. We had to leave Meaux at midday on Monday; I came on in the carriage direct, the others rode; we met M. Favre and his companions and the Minister had a conversation with him on the way, in the little Château à la Maison, near Montry.

"Jules Favre came on here, but was not lodged in the château, of course, but in the village. He again had a conversation with the Minister, and another yesterday morning. There was a Conference before the last one, between the Chief, Moltke and Roon at the King's. As Jules Favre arrived before it was over he was brought to our office with his two companions, and there they sat, rather forlornly. One of them, M. Rink, I had known as Secretary to the French Embassy in Berlin. I went in out of curiosity, and partly from sympathy, feeling that I ought not to be impolite to them. I was introduced to M. Favre, and we conversed for quite half-an-hour, not, of course, on dangerous topics. I did not see them after their interview with the Minister, and all I know of the subjects dealt with, was what I had to telegraph to Berlin for the Press last evening. You will see my telegram in the papers, to the effect that the object of the interview was to learn whether a guarantee could be found for some Government which the country at large would acknowledge, with which we could negotiate. This is, in fact, the only thing about which it is possible to hold a Conference at present. For how can there be any negotiations for peace before one knows with whom to carry them on? I don't know whether anything definite is

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<sup>1</sup> Jules Favre, 1809-1880. Became Member of the Government for National Defence and Minister for Foreign Affairs on September 4.

settled yet, for the Minister does not talk about affairs while negotiations are being carried on, and he is quite right.

"We were in great suspense yesterday. The Chief, of course, left everything else owing to his interview with Favre, and after it was over, he said he would walk in the garden, and rest under a tree. He must have been in great excitement and exhaustion after the fatigue he has had.

"We were all in such suspense that we could not enjoy our leisure. When we saw the Chief towards evening and found him cheerful and in a good temper, we were delighted and calmed. He owned to being tired, and no wonder.

"I have already written that we did not contemplate pressing their Louis Napoleon upon the French. If they wish to have him they can get him. It is a matter of indifference to us how and by whom the French wish to be governed. We can treat with any Government which will accept our conditions of peace, and give the necessary guarantee. You will have seen the news of the Empress Eugénie's flight to England in the papers. She is now at Hastings with her son and a chamberlain and a sort of maid, and a faithful servant. The rest of the servants left her. I really believe she would gladly have gone to her husband, and we should not have objected had the Emperor wished it.

"News of our troops round Paris came this morning; they have been extraordinarily well received at Versailles, the inhabitants looking upon them as a protection against disorder. There is great discord between the National Guard and the infantry, the officers frequently being obliged to use their arms."

"CHÂTEAU FERRIÈRES, *Wednesday Evening,*  
*September 21, 1870.*

"There has not been any diplomatic news since Jules Favre left at midday the day before yesterday. I am curious to know how Jules Favre was received on his return to Paris, and whether he and his companions still hold the reins. Paris has been entirely surrounded since Monday, and probably no newspapers can be got out, at least, none had been received in Brussels. We shall quietly wait and see what will happen, and not one life shall be sacrificed unnecessarily. Let Paris, which considers itself the centre of the world, see how it can get on without the rest of the world."

*"September 24, 1870.*

"The negotiations with Jules Favre have led to nothing, as you will learn from the papers. We made very reasonable conditions for an armistice while they called a new Assembly of the French people and thus be enabled to obtain some assurance



of the recognition of the Government. You will read this in the newspapers. Jules Favre has not come back, but has written to decline in the name of the Government. His letter is dated the 22nd-23rd. War will therefore be continued. We can feel easier about it than they. There has been no military news these last few days. The capitulation of the fortress of Toul was welcome news yesterday, because it makes our communication easier with Germany."

*"September 25, 1870.*

"Although since the negotiations with Jules Favre have missed fire, the war of pens and firearms has come to a standstill, there is enough to be done in the preparation and explanation of despatches to our Ministers, and many other such matters.

"Count Bismarck was out of sorts, physically and mentally, in the early part of last week, the negotiations with Favre worried him, but he has become more benign and cheerful since they were broken off. It was, indeed, a time of frightful suspense. He has dined with us several times instead of with the King.

"The Crown Prince is quite recovered, and looks extremely well. He was here when Favre's letter arrived, and he said to me in passing: 'Favre will not,' to which I replied: 'He probably *can* not.' Both will and power wanting.

"It is perfectly true, as an officer remarked, that one sees hardly any Frenchwomen about. Count Bismarck said the other day that young and pretty girls were so rare that he makes a point of greeting them whenever he meets them."

*"Monday, September 26, 1870.*

"A letter was read at the King's yesterday which commented on the King's dignified manner towards the Emperor, and it expressed admiration for the Prussian army. It further said that the French had had no idea of the army, otherwise they would not have gone to war. A fine excuse for beginning war, because a nation felt itself the stronger of the two, and not because it felt its cause to be a just one."

Abeken had a nervous attack at Ferrières on the 27th, which he called a "nervous affection of the fingers" or "writers' cramp." The letter ended in quite a changed handwriting. The following letters bear evidence of this attack. The severe exertion and heavy work combined with the extreme excitement of the war, as well as the agitation of mind inseparable from the responsibilities of his position, had undermined his strong constitution and

brought on a stroke. Lauer, the King's physician, soon brought him round, but the attack proved to be but the beginning of the fatal illness which was to lay him low. He went on with his work, however, at first dictating to a secretary, and then going on with it as usual.

" *Evening, 28th.*

" I agree with you that we must take Paris before we return home. It would be thought that we had not conquered the French unless we set foot in Paris, nor would our army tolerate the idea of our not doing so. They are now doing all they can in Paris to force us to it. You will see in the papers about the time you receive this letter, Count Bismarck's despatch concerning his interviews with Jules Favre. It is an admirably drawn up, clear document, dictated to Count Hatzfeldt, his own work entirely. I don't think any sensible person can misunderstand the reasonableness of our demands. All the better that they have been refused."

" *October 1, 1870.*

" You will have heard that there was some fighting on the Queen's birthday, and would have known more about it than we did if the Crown Prince had not come in after it was over. It occurred early in the morning, not an important battle, but the French have again been driven *en déroute* into Paris. There seems to be a complete factory of lies established at Tours, the seat of one portion of the Government, and not only does it issue news of victories, but to-day, it actually announced that two Baden regiments had revolted, and refused to go under fire, and that a number of soldiers had to be shot. Now, as a matter of fact, there is not a single Baden soldier anywhere about Paris, and the best of it is, we have good reason to believe that Trochu has just been in that position himself in regard to the zouaves, who at last fled. And they have announced that Bismarck has declared he would continue the war until he had reduced France to a second-rate power. He, of course, neither thinks nor intends to do anything of the sort, and there is no such thing in our conditions of peace, as not to leave France sufficiently strong.

" We have no details about the occupation of Rome.<sup>1</sup> Although the war part was only a comedy, a comedy which my feeling towards the Pope would not have let me carry out. A temporal sovereign may make a show of resistance, just to prove

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<sup>1</sup> The Italian army entered Rome on September 20, and the temporal power of the Pope came to an end.

his power against those who act with violence towards him, even if a few lives are lost thereby; but the Pope ought not to have sacrificed a single life. Is it not a bitter irony that he had to ask the Italians to maintain order in that part of the city which remains his?"

"October 2nd.

"The days fly without change. While there is silence concerning great matters in foreign policy, watching for the decision before or in Paris, the German question, that is, the question as to the future formation of Germany comes more to the front, especially since Delbrück's<sup>1</sup> Conferences at Munich. Count Bismarck has therefore called our colleague, Bucher,<sup>2</sup> here. His work has always been about German affairs, and particularly with the Constitution of the North German Federation. I am very glad, for there is a good deal concerning the Constitution which is not familiar to me, and it would have fallen upon Keudell, who, in the early part of his career, was familiar with the administrative work, but who is already overwhelmed. He has to have conferences with officials, with secret agents and others, and also the whole correspondence about the occupied provinces, and he could not possibly do it all. A cypherer and a chancellery clerk are coming with Bucher. Our headquarters are always so unwieldy that this is a disadvantage, but on the other hand, the additional workers will be an advantage, and will relieve us all from such constant work."

"Evening.

"I understand how you disbelieved at first in the fall of Strassburg, and that the Queen was not certain, is owing, perhaps to the wording of the telegram, if it was the same as the one which arrived here. We also were in some doubt and uncertainty at first. It ran thus: 'Strassburg just capitulates,' not 'has capitulated.' Some of us thought that the negotiations were only beginning, and might perhaps, lead to nothing. I can understand too that you cannot feel entirely happy. We were very glad, because we have regard to the importance of the immense military results; this means the release of a great number of troops, of a large quantity of artillery, of a new railway, and gives us the undisputed command of Alsace."

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<sup>1</sup> He managed the negotiations in 1870, when President of the Chancellery of the Federation, with the South German States in their connection with the German Empire.

<sup>2</sup> Lothar Bucher. An official in the Foreign Office since 1864. His history is given with much detail in Moritz Busch's *Bismarck*.—Tr.

## CHAPTER VI

### VERSAILLES—CONTINUANCE OF THE WAR— CAPITULATION OF METZ

1870

“Keine Nation gewinnt ein Urtheil, als wenn sie über sich selbst urtheilen kann. Zu diesen grossen Vorthail gelangt sie aber zu spät.”—GOETHE'S *Ethisches*, II.

#### *To his Wife.*

“VERSAILLES, *October 5. Evening.*

“We only arrived here after sunset. We are very far from the King, who is at the Prefecture, not at the Chateau; and we are at a distance from the Minister to his just annoyance. In addition to this inconvenience, we are scattered about in different houses, rather far from one another; Keudell, Bismarck-Bohlen and I are nicely housed, but it was more comfortable at Ferrières where we were altogether in the same house. It is a contrast here to the charming quiet of Ferrières, for though a large number of the townspeople have forsaken the place, the noise of the troops and numberless crowds of camp followers who have turned up here is great. We went to the hotel for dinner on our arrival, the Hôtel des Réservoirs, for our cook was not settled. The dining-room was full, partly with acquaintances, and partly with unknown Princes, Hereditary Princes, Dukes, Grand Dukes, pretenders and abdicated princes. There was a hubbub of talk, and popping of champagne corks, which was very trying.

“Our quiet life at Ferrières has quite spoilt us.”

“*October 6. Morning.*

“We shall certainly stay here for a while. At all events, I don't know where we could go to be nearer the siege. The siege! Until now it (Paris) has only been surrounded, but yesterday the first division of the heavy siege-guns crossed the Seine on a pontoon bridge close to our front. This will be going on until the end of next week, until all are here, for we shall not begin with separate detachments of them, but wait for all to work at the same time.”

“*Thursday Evening.*

“I have just read the Archbishop of Köln's letter and the proclamation of the dogma of Infallibility in the *Kölnische Zeitung*. I have seldom been so filled with shame and



indignation as I have by this document. How can a man reconcile himself to deal a blow at himself and at the truth? The first part is almost the worst, for the Archbishop, who knows the Council, must know that what he says of its acceptance by the entire Christian world, and of its wisdom, is not true, and if he believes this lie to be true, it is almost worse than anything else. It is bad for a man to lie, but as long as he knows he is lying, he may arrive at the truth; but when he ceases to know he is lying, or even persuades himself that he is speaking the truth, it is incurable. Thus with the dogma of Papal Infallibility! As the Archbishop defines and limits it, it cannot be called unreasonable, but is a decided declaration on certain definite doctrines of faith and morals; it excludes individual cases, and all that does not belong to the universal teaching of the Church on faith and morals. I can understand that right-minded Roman Catholics can come to terms with this interpretation, although I could not submit my moral conscience and faith to such a dogma as that of Papal Infallibility.

"I don't understand this subordination to others in matters spiritual and moral, but I could obey contrary to my convictions in things not actually wrong, although my convictions would remain unchanged. When Bismarck gives some order which I do not think right, as indeed, he does sometimes, I obey; or when the majority speaks and certain things become law, I can and must submit with the minority. But what I believe and judge to be right and good, that I have to settle with myself, for no Pope, no Bismarck, no majority can do this for me. The interpretation which Archbishop Melchers<sup>1</sup> puts upon this new doctrine, is not all that the Roman Curia means, as perhaps he will soon find out to his alarm."

"October 7.

"A little affair occurred yesterday about the people coming out of Paris. The Greek Chargé d'Affaires with his family and officials were joined by country people wishing to take the advantage of the *sauf conduit*, from the French Minister of War to leave. But they managed to get into the midst of some fighting going on north of Paris, towards St. Denis, and they hid behind some trees, bending down until they got to our outposts. They arrived thus far because they were provided with a pass by the American Minister, Mr. Washburn. They said the town wore a warlike aspect, but was quiet. The French show good courage and determination. The news of the dissension and

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<sup>1</sup> Became Archbishop of Köln in 1865.

also of the street-fighting which we heard about a few days ago, are, at all events, untrue. Meat had begun to be scarce and dear."

"October 8, 1870.

"Delbrück is expected to-day. He is indispensable here on account of German affairs which begin to take shape. In Würtemberg even the King has fallen in with the national stream of thought, since the departure of Varnbüler, and has even said that this course could not be again diverted. The Government is prepared to give up more of its rights than Bavaria is, and has almost determined to join the North German Federation just as it is. Baden will make a proposal on the subject, or has done so already. The great difficulty is with Bavaria."

"10th. Morning.

"I can understand that Keudell's letters to his wife have been short of late. He really has more to do than I have, partly because Bismarck sends him with personal and verbal messages to all the military authorities, and to the public and secret agents, for his department regulates the negotiations with the authorities of the provinces, Alsace, &c. Bismarck is angry when the officials ask for instructions, and have no initiative, while, on the other hand, he gets furious when they act on their own responsibility, and do something which doesn't suit him. He is extraordinary in these matters, and Keudell often finds it difficult to keep things smooth. I often pity him, but he does most things admirably, and succeeds so well because he acts with great unselfishness and disinterestedness. I feel the greater admiration for him, because I could not do the same. We both, however, require to bear in mind the great qualities of our chief, and his eminent qualifications for doing that which he is called upon by God to do. To make our intercourse with him bearable we have to remember that his faults are the consequence of this."

"Monday Evening.

"I have just come from the King, not from tea, but from seeing him about a report. The Minister sent me, I hardly know why, about something which might have been done to-morrow, and desired me to bear his excuses for not going himself, because he was indisposed, and a late audience costs him his night's rest. He could not have remembered that it was already nine o'clock, and that I must call the King from tea. He graciously came, but was evidently surprised at the lateness of the hour. Such amiability as his can hardly be found in any other sovereign."

"VERSAILLES, *October 12, 1870. Evening.*

"We have chanced upon an excellent spot here, for our house is detached and in its own beautiful garden, in a side street, perfectly quiet, the only drawback is that the house has thin walls, and every sound is heard. This, and the distance from the King with the uncomfortableness of the Minister's own special rooms, will oblige us to change our dwelling in the course of a few days."

"*October 13th. Evening.*

"Our military police have been reorganized with a strong force to watch strangers in Versailles, so that soon there will not be a face in the place unknown to the police, and every newcomer will be carefully examined. The King is by nature incautious, it is true, or rather, he is too confiding and trusting; that is, he does not trust to his star, as Louis Napoleon did, but to God, and He will carry him through all dangers. And although foresight and care are necessary, they cannot do everything, so if God does not protect the house, danger might befall when least expected, so we shall not cease to be watchful while putting our trust in God.

"Your letters come fairly regularly now, and when we make the railways more secure they will come quicker. They were torn up the day before yesterday by some mischievous hand, and the train ran off the rails. There were a number of deaths and many were injured. Now there is an order for a pilot locomotive to go with every train, carrying the municipality and most important residents to the next stopping-place, so they will take good care that nothing happens now. But how the French rage against their own flesh. News arrived to-day that the beautiful palace of St. Cloud has been set on fire and it cannot be extinguished. A few days ago a bomb fell on the Emperor's bed.

"The King kept us all some time. Then there was a good deal of chatting in the ante-room. I walked home by fine moonlight with Delbrück and Prince Pless whose conversation was good. We came to the conclusion that if the victorious army of the Loire does not break the courage of the Parisians, (and it will not, for they will neither learn nor believe), the crisis must be deferred for a few weeks until our heavy guns shall have done their work."

"*Friday Morning, October 14, 1870.*

"If we could only have Wildenbruch to tea at the King's sometimes it would be a good thing. I thought so yesterday.

The King's conversation and anecdotes entertain the whole party unless the Prince of Bavaria or the Grand Duke of Weimar, who sit beside him, take up his attention. My colleague has more writing to do than I, because the German affairs are in his department. We expect a number of the German Ministers for a preliminary Conference. I hope to see a Congress of Princes afterwards.

"Count Bismarck has been in a particularly good temper lately, and most communicative and cheerful, and unusually *coulant* about business. It is a good sign and shows that he feels well, so we are all delighted for the sake of public matters, for our own sakes and for his. You are right as to his being the chief sufferer when he is not. And when one thinks of all that rests on his shoulders, and all that he does, one ought not to say a word but rather reproach oneself for unkind thoughts."

"VERSAILLES, *Sunday Evening, October 16, 1870.*

"I am commanded to tea again this evening, but I begin a letter first. The others are still at coffee, liqueur and cigars, by the fire downstairs, and Keudell is playing, and even Count Bismarck listens in comfort and is apparently refreshed. He was quite ailing this morning, after a sleepless night, caused by all sorts of annoyances yesterday, and an ill-advised walk in the fog.

"The King has kept us fairly long so I can't write any more, but just one thing I must tell you. As I was about to drive to the King's a Würtemberger officer came with the Papal Nuncio who was direct from Paris, and conducted here from our outposts by the officer. As I knew him thirty years ago in Rome when he was a Papal officer, young, distinguished and ambitious, and frequently seen at English parties, before he became priest, I could not resist speaking to him. He certainly did not remember me, and I should not have recognized him in his very priestly garb, but the change in temporal matters was too piquant, he the quondam officer, now in clerical dress and I in uniform! He was very pleasant. We spoke in Italian, then I had to go to the King while poor Keudell had to drive about town for an hour and a half to find lodgings for him."

"*Monday Evening.*

"There are many indications that there will be a speedy climax at Metz, one being the presence of General Boyer<sup>1</sup> here. The world will be in a state of excitement again, and give vent

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<sup>1</sup> Adjutant to Bazaine.



to all sorts of speculations, because there is a show of publicity and no attempt at secrecy. . . .

"I have just come from the King and will only say good-night. I took your Trumpet poem by Freiligrath<sup>1</sup> with me, and the Grand Duke of Weimar read it aloud to the admiration of every one. The King and the whole party were deeply moved, and after a short silence, they could not praise it enough. I was very glad I brought it, though it seemed too grave a poem for a tea-party. It was a good thing I did, as otherwise the King would not have known it, and as it is just in his line, its simplicity appeals to him, and he was delighted with it. It is not sentimental, but deeply touching and sad.

"I found our office in some excitement on my return owing to a report of an alarm in the night. It had not been thought about at his Majesty's, they did think that a great sortie might be made to-morrow, the Crown Prince's birthday, the anniversary of the battle of Leipzig."

*"Tuesday, October 18, 1870.*

"I need hardly tell you that notwithstanding the reports, the night passed off quietly. It is not the way of the French to make night sorties; they dare not venture with such troops as they have in Paris. They must be content with what they can do by day, for by night they would get separated, and we can bring together here at any threatened point, 60,000 men within two hours, and we have nothing but strong positions, and the principal lines for a sortie are flanked by one hundred pieces of field-artillery."

*"Evening.*

"You are sure to have recollected this anniversary. It is a remarkable day with its Janus' face turned towards both the past and the future, a glorious past, the nation's battle at Leipzig, and in our Crown Prince we have a future full of hope and comfort, which will develop into grander maturity.

"I don't know whether I wrote what Bismarck said to me for the first time, about the Crown Prince. It was the day after our long ride round Sedan, while we were driving from Donchery to Vendresse. He spoke with approbation and confidence and was quite happy in the thought. I fancy, however, I did write that the Minister told me he found so much more in him than he had imagined, and how different he appeared, and also that the Crown Prince himself has spoken to him about their relations towards each other, and was very kind and frank,

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<sup>1</sup> "Der Trompeter von Vionville."

so he has great hopes of him. What a wonderful present ours is with its hopes set on the young heir to the throne, and its memories of the days of the War of Liberation. We may indeed, quote Goethe's lines :—

“ ‘ Liegt Dir gestern klar und offen,  
Wirkst Du heute kräftig frei,  
Darfst auch auf ein Morgen hoffen,  
Das nicht minder glücklich sei ! ’ ”

“ Officials and officers from Headquarters assembled to present their good wishes to the Crown Prince, and as it was such glorious weather he received us outside his house, saying a few kind words to each. He has never celebrated the day in the midst of his brave army and in such surroundings. The King made him happy by giving him some iron crosses to bestow on those present.

“ By the King's command the fountains in the gardens played. I had seen them playing the day after our arrival, so I did not go to the gardens but drove to the Villa de l'Etoile with my colleague, Bucher. It is north-east of Versailles and half-way to St. Cloud. Count Hatzfeldt and Bismarck-Bohlen remained to see the fountains, and Keudell was busy. Count Harrach told me lately that St. Cloud was an excellent place for a view of Paris, others have said the same, and the King yesterday. So it proved. The little Villa d'Avray is on a hill more than half a mile from here and the view from it is magnificent. It stands in beautiful gardens, as are all the gardens about here, and the view between two wooded hills is fine both from the garden and from the upper rooms. The forest south of the city can be seen. It was my first glimpse of Paris and I felt the strangeness of this modern Babylon lying at our feet. I brought the large field-glasses and could recognize every detail, towers, cupolas, the Arc de Triomphe where I could discern people standing about. Notre Dame, the dome of the Invalides, the Pantheon, &c. There was continual firing from the forts, from those at a distance only the flash and smoke showed their whereabouts, but we heard the noise nearer to us.”

“ VERSAILLES, *Wednesday Morning, October 19, 1870.*

“ One could almost fancy oneself in Paris yesterday, so clearly was everything seen, and I almost wondered at not being able to drive in. The French evidently thought we were intending to make an assault yesterday. Our outposts observed a strong detachment of troops approach from the city. It is just

like the French, and it was the same with the first Napoleon to make a display on such days, though they did not do anything on August 15,<sup>1</sup> this year, but this is not our way. The King agreed with me the evening before last, that such anniversaries are very pleasant associations when they fall by accident, but that they only amount to superstition if chosen on purpose, and the Bible forbids it. So yesterday passed off quietly, although deserters would have us believe that the French intended to make a great sortie on the 18th or 19th. There was only the usual firing without any harm being done, except the wounding of a few individuals slightly. The French waste a good deal of unnecessary powder with no other result. In the great sorties they have not been successful; several days will elapse before we are ready to attack. The placing guns in position takes an unutterably long time, and the order was given too late.

"The idea of Bismarck opposing the bombardment of Paris because of its works of art or for the splendours of Paris itself, is incredibly ridiculous. I think nothing in Paris would give him a transient desire to spare it, if he considered the bombardment right from a political and military point of view. As there are so far no signs of the Parisians coming to reason, it will be right and necessary to bombard it. We cannot wish the people to be brought to their senses by hunger; the effect of that would be frightful, so it will be far better for them to be bombarded than forced by hunger to submit."

*"Thursday Morning. 20th.*

"Bismarck was too much indisposed to go to the King to-day, so he sent me. The King had appointed six o'clock without knowing it was our supper time. The report lasted until seven, longer than I had thought. I was obliged to ask for certain decisions which were distasteful to him, so it was a trying hour, but I was glad it was I and not Count Bismarck, for nothing worries him so much as to have an audience of the King on matters which the latter does not like, and just now, he is dreadfully nervous. The King gives way at last, but the Minister's strength is taxed by the effort, and we are quite anxious about him sometimes. It is no wonder he is irritable with us, and vents his irritation with the King, on us. When I sometimes get vexed, I silently beg his pardon, and am chiefly annoyed with myself for the feeling.

"No less than eight Ministers will arrive on Saturday; three

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<sup>1</sup> The first Napoleon's birthday.

Bavarians, two or three from Würtemberg, two from Baden, and there will be a good deal of talking, chattering and writing. I am glad these German affairs do not belong to my department. They are very intricate, and many details have to be thought of."

*"Friday Evening.*

"I should not have had good news to give you yesterday or the day before, about the Count. He was weak and nervous, but is much better to-day, and I hope he will soon be his old self. I need not tell you not to mention the fluctuations of his health to the family, or to speak at all about them. The world must believe that Bismarck is well, and so he is for business purposes; it is only in little personal matters that he vexes himself and us more than is necessary."

*"Saturday Evening, 22nd.*

"Gersdorff dined with us to-day. He joined the army as a Landwehr officer, and is doing outpost near St. Cloud just now. He is here for a short rest, but returns the day after to-morrow. He says the gunboats on the Seine are more dangerous than Fort St. Valérien. It makes him indignant to see how often they fire merely to amuse the people. To-morrow, Sunday, there will be a great deal of firing to entertain the Parisian ladies of various classes who go on Sundays. He can see them distinctly. Fort Mont St. Valérien was filled with ladies to see the sortie yesterday."

*"Morning, 23rd.*

"A bombardment forcing the fools to surrender, would have been more merciful, perhaps, than a prolonged siege, with all its horrors of hunger and want, which could not be stopped at once, even when the siege was raised, because food sufficient for two million people could not be taken there immediately, as you will have seen in our public statement. We must first show mercy to our own soldiers and country, for charity begins at home. The question for us is, to use every means in our power to bring about the best and quickest peace. All other considerations ought to follow this, the supreme one. Real humanity is to make an end to the war as soon as possible."

*"October 26, 1870.*

"This is General Moltke's birthday. He is seventy years old. You will have read Bancroft's<sup>1</sup> letter of thanks for the congratulations he received at the Jubilee of his Doctor's degree,

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<sup>1</sup> George Bancroft, Minister from the United States, 1867-1874.



in which he writes very charmingly about the actions of 'old people' at the present time. It is true that old people are young now, but, thank God, the times teach us that which we have doubted now and then, and that is, that youth is still youth, is still capable of enthusiasm, and of being young, and we may, therefore, trust to the future for a solution of the hard and mighty questions which are more difficult of solution in intellectual struggles, than are those which can be settled by the sword!

"Is it not the strangest situation? The Emperor Louis Napoleon really a prisoner at Wilhelmshöhe, and his protégé, the Pope, in the Vatican conducting himself as if he were a prisoner, indeed, wishing to be one. But as a matter of fact, he is not that at all. Inspired he certainly is not, or else, instead of complaining that he is not at liberty to rule the Church, he would prove to the world that he is free to rule it by the Sceptre of the Spirit. But he expects to do something himself, hoping to perform wonders with foreign aid. It is still more unlikely that foreign Powers will place him again on his temporal throne.

"I have just driven with Keudell to congratulate Count Moltke on his birthday. We arrived just in time, for he was going to attend a conference at the King's. Keudell's wife asked him to take some flowers which, fortunately, he was able to do. She used to be intimate with Frau von Moltke. In his quiet, unaffected way, the old gentleman was deeply touched. Our congratulations were the first he had received, except a beautiful, artistic address from Nürnberg, which, coming from a German town, gave him special pleasure. There was also a paper with the announcement that he was given the Freedom of Magdeburg."

*"October 27, 1870.*

"You will have seen in the papers that we are expecting M. Thiers. First of all, he wishes to enter Paris in order to come to some agreement with the Government there, which is not always in accord with that at Tours. He is to receive permission, but he must get it in person from Headquarters, for communication with Paris cannot, of course, take place in any other way. Whether he gets out again for further efforts, or whether they will deem him a suitable representative, or whether they will let him out again for any reason, seems to me doubtful. However, we shall see. You can hardly think how remarkably calm we are about the newspaper agitation, and that on the Bourse and among our friends in Berlin. We are so close to the events

they do not affect us as they do people at a distance. We work and leave the guidance to God. So does the King. Bismarck, is to be sure, the one who is affected by it the most, which is natural, for all responsibility rests upon him first of all, to forge each link in the chain of great statesmanship, and make it possible for the King to give his sanction quickly and unerringly. I hope Thiers will get news on his arrival which may prove unexpected, for he will then have something to carry in to the Parisians!

"The reports to his Majesty are usually satisfactory. It rarely chances that I have to defend anything with which I am not in agreement, or of which I could not say that though I think quite differently, Count Bismarck understands and judges better than I can do. He has, moreover, the brilliant wit, and ready tact to find the vital point in any question, although his opponent, or any one else, may have meant something quite different. He does not always reply to his opponent's question, but says what he wishes to say, and generally what has to be said, whether it is agreeable or not."

*"Friday Morning, October 28, 1870.*

"173,000 men, 6,000 officers, 3 marshals!<sup>1</sup> I knew the negotiations had begun and would be concluded this evening, before I sent off your letter yesterday morning, but from that superstition which you know I possess, I did not venture to mention them either yesterday morning or in the evening, for 'between the cup and the lip there's many a slip.'<sup>2</sup> A telegram expected yesterday, was delayed, and made me extremely anxious. The town was full of the news of the capitulation, it was even in the newspapers, and the King had commanded the great tattoo in celebration of it. The wind-up took place at night, and the telegram arrived early this morning. I heard it at the Crown Prince's villa whither I had driven about something. On my return I found that the General Staff also had the news.

"It was said yesterday that there were only 150,000 men and 4,000 officers, we having underrated the numbers at first, the reverse of the French way. Bismarck-Bohlen became quite Biblical yesterday, saying that Prince Friedrich Karl would now say apropos the 80,000 men taken by his uncle at Sedan, that 'Saul had slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands.'

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<sup>1</sup> The capitulation of Metz to Prince Friedrich Karl.

<sup>2</sup> Written in English.

"I am curious whether the French will, without wishing to do so, give us a *feu de joie* by a sortie. The King wrote on the first despatch yesterday, Victoria. It is such an enormous affair that one can scarcely imagine it.

"We have a large army in Germany now, like our own in time of peace, an *Invasion de la Race Latine*, but rather another kind than that of the *Invasion de la Race Germanique*, about which the French complain. Considerable difficulties arise as to how we can shelter them. People cannot comprehend why, with such an army, Marshal Bazaine did not try to get it out, which would have been all the more easy, because he would not have been obliged to leave by the narrow sortie gate of the fortress which was flanked by our guns, but have encamped his army between the forts outside. A sortie with 100,000 men, which he had at his disposal at any moment, must have nearly succeeded, because the besieging army could never have had so many soldiers at any one point when one considers it. He could have fought his way out with 150,000 men at any one point, like a wedge against the 250,000 which surrounded him. I grant this triumph to Prince Friedrich Karl and his army, for they had a hard task in deprivation and self-sacrifice to accomplish this great success."

"Sunday Evening, October 30, 1870.

"Prince Friedrich Karl has now attained the burning desire of his life. He has become a Field-Marshal. He has had a hard task which with self-denial he succeeded in carrying out. The last French army is now in Germany. Our heroes did not fall in vain at St. Privat.

"Without their heroic deeds the charge of August 18th, would not have ended as it did in shutting up Bazaine and his army. The Emperor wishes to have the four marshals with him at Wilhelmshöhe. There is no reason for refusing this, so Bazaine, who had wished to go to Mainz, has been sent to Cassel. We heard to-day quite unexpectedly, that the Empress Eugénie has arrived at Wilhelmshöhe. She will meet Bazaine there. Had she tried sooner to meet him and had she not so scornfully repulsed Bourbaki when he left Metz, she might have managed matters differently. Had Bazaine been sure of her, (her support), he might have declared himself for her (as Regent), and against the Republican Government in Paris. There would then have been a Bonapartist party supported by Bazaine's army, with which we could have treated. Instead of this, the last vestige of power has vanished from France, and only chaos remains.

"Is Thiers the man about whom the French can rally? He paid the Minister a short visit at Versailles this morning, but by his desire, public matters were not discussed. He is probably in Paris by this time, whence he hoped to come either to-morrow or the day after, and talk over present affairs.

"You will have read in the newspapers of the 28th, the King's admirable order to the army, in which he thanks them, and at the same time, announcing that the two Princes have been made Field-Marschals, and Moltke created a count. It is said that the latter, in his simple, hearty fashion, is pleased. It is in keeping with his unaffected character. In her child-like way, his wife would have been delighted. How often have I involuntarily thought of her, and felt for him more than ever that she could not have lived until now! Not to be able to share such happiness as these victories with his dearest must be a frightful sorrow to him. I hope he has her firmly enough in his heart to share all with her.

"The Crown Prince drew me into a corner before tea for a political talk which was entirely satisfactory. But when Prince Adalbert<sup>1</sup> pumped me it was less agreeable.

"I told the King at tea an anecdote of Blankenburg's<sup>2</sup> about the ignorance of the French officers. Some one at Stettin taunted one of them with the French having employed the Turkish and Arab troops against us. 'Mais que voulez-vous,' he replied, 'vous nous avez lâché les Poméraniens.' 'Monsieur, pray consider what you are saying in the capital of Pomerania!' 'Mais Monsieur! ne vous moquez pas de moi—nous en sommes au moins a 300 lieues de distance.' The King was greatly amused, and he said that the French officers were quite without maps, only a few having some bad maps with them of 'Le theatre de la guerre' which extended from Metz to Dresden and Berlin!"

*To Herr von Olfers.*

"The King remarked at tea yesterday evening that the Berliners became 'quite wild' when they did not get a telegram every week announcing a great battle, and got impatient thinking the army was doing nothing. They apparently did not understand what the difficulties of transporting and mounting some hundreds of heavy guns were, and all sorts of fancies were in their heads as to our having become weak and afraid to bombard Paris! The Berliners might rest content for a while with the

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<sup>1</sup> Adalbert, Prince of Prussia, 1810-1873. Chief of the navy from 1843.

<sup>2</sup> Herr von Blankenburg, politician. A friend of Bismarck's.



173,000 prisoners from Metz. We have 340,000 Frenchmen in Germany, a larger number of troops than our army in time of peace, and here there are none of the troops who began the war, for all are either dead or in Germany, while those now in the field have been brought together since.

"God preserve us from arrogance. There is no fear of that in our dear King, nor is there any pride or boasting in Bismarck, he is too much in the midst of public affairs, and knows too well the inner workings of everything, and how little has been done by men, and how much by God. Indeed, more often than not by the failures of our enemies rather than by our own arms."

### *To his Wife.*

*"Monday Evening, October 31, 1870.*

"The guns are continually booming while I write. The enemy have begun a tremendous firing this last half-hour, with their guns on Mount St. Valérien. What they intend to do in this darkness it is hard to comprehend, for they cannot do us any great damage. Perhaps they wish to rouse little Thiers' courage. He came out of Paris again this evening, and is to have an interview with the Minister to-morrow.

"I wish his negotiation may have some result provided he is really accredited by the Government in Paris, and has powers to act. We shall know to-morrow. I think we shall have to take Paris or else they will never consider themselves vanquished, and will, as a French sympathizer, the Paris correspondent of an English paper, says, forget it in six months, and then deny that the German army ever victoriously surrounded Paris. They must feel or else they will not believe.

"Don't believe what the papers say about differences between Moltke and Bismarck in regard to peace and the way of obtaining it. It is absolutely untrue that Bismarck, for diplomatic reasons, and the King for the sake of humanity, have been opposed to the bombardment. The King declared again the day before yesterday, that the only reason for the delay was owing to military arrangements, and that those who ascribe the delay to other reasons have no idea what the difficulties are. Divers people here think there is no need to bombard, and that, with patience everything will be accomplished without it, but the King and Bismarck belong to this set as little as I do. I certainly seem to myself sometimes rather bloodthirsty when I am longing to hear our own guns, but then I have the conviction that it is necessary to speak to the Parisians in metallic tones. It will also

cost us some sacrifice, but we have learnt to consider the object in view, not the sacrifice.

"The sacrifices are, indeed, very hard. The fights yesterday and the day before, though successes for us, cost us the lives of two regimental commanders, one of whom was a brother of Count Waldersee, the King's adjutant. He is in the Queen Augusta regiment and had just returned after his recovery from a wound. Thus is our joy in victory much damped.

"It was very pleasant to have received the news about Metz on the 27th, Mary's birthday, but it was quite unpermissible, and the King's telegram was precipitate, for the capitulation was not signed until night, and therefore uncertain before that time. The General Staff were somewhat embarrassed at the King having the great bell rung on the morning of the 27th announcing the preliminary negotiations which they had wished to keep secret. The penalty, therefore, is that the French will not believe it, and those who do believe it, try to find different motives for it, Imperial ones which will find fresh corroboration in the fact of Bazaine's going to Cassel. But the truth is that all the Imperial intrigues and plans have been frightfully checked by the capitulation which robs the Emperor of the only real power which he could hope to retain. You can believe me that in the capitulation there is no political or other reservation, for it is solely the result of hunger, and possibly, the demoralization of the army, for demoralized it must be, most frightfully. Otherwise, Bazaine would have made an attempt to fight his way out, and with half his army he might have succeeded, even if he had had to sacrifice the other half."

## CHAPTER VII

1870

"And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily."—S. LUKE xviii. 7, 8.

THE negotiations were broken off with Thiers owing to the incredible demands of France, the provisioning of Paris; without offering anything as equivalent other than an elect Assembly, not even proposing to give up one of the forts. The siege therefore proceeded, and the troops from Metz took part in the investment.

*"Wednesday Evening, November 2, 1870.*

"I was obliged to go to Colonel Meydam, the Director of the telegraph, this evening and speak to him about the mutilation of our telegrams which occurs far too often. He gave me an example of the accidents which happen to the despatches. There was a good deal of criticism about the King's Metz telegram, because of the expression, 'One of the most important events of the month,' which was a telegraphic error, month having been telegraphed instead of 'moment.' It was sent off from here all right. The telegraphist was uncertain of the word in the King's handwriting, and Colonel Meydam said it was 'moment,' so the mistake was made somewhere between this place and Berlin, which, of course sounded very weak concerning such an event, while 'moment' was two or three times as expressive, for the occurrence took place just at the critical time which gave it a double and threefold importance, thwarting the intrigues and plans of the Imperial party, and giving an answer in advance to M. Thiers.

"Thiers had another interview with Count Bismarck to-day which lasted three hours, and the latter considers him as very refined, companionable and amiable, but not cut out for a negotiator.

"It is rumoured that there is no Government in Paris on Sunday with which Thiers can treat, for the Commune with Felix Pyat<sup>1</sup> and the Socialists have assumed the reins. It may

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<sup>1</sup> One of the principal Communists of 1871.

be true, but it is difficult to learn anything definite. I hope they will hang Jules Favre, Rochfort,<sup>1</sup> Trochu,<sup>2</sup> and others. What will the Government at Tours say? Well, the future will reveal, I haven't the impression that anything will come of Thiers' action, because he has no real power at his back.

"When I was in the garden to-day I saw him with the Minister at the window. He is a genuine Frenchman, refined, clever, with a head of the old type. Favre, on the other hand, looked the modern uncultured Frenchman, although he looked clever, and perhaps a more honourable man than Thiers.

*" Thursday Morning.*

"Yesterday morning there was great excitement in Versailles because of a report that Bazaine was in our rear with his whole army and only ten hours distant. The people firmly believed it, and they don't believe yet in the capitulation of Metz, although they see the fact in the newspapers. They don't, however, really read, for the *Moniteur* is officially published by the Prussian authorities. But this paper is being conducted ill-advisedly, and there is nothing in it except disagreeables, a contemptuous tone towards France and the French nation, dealing blows instead of adopting a friendly tone, and filling the paper with extracts from other papers so that one has to search through it for interesting news. The French do not read foreign papers, and I don't know whether they would be allowed in, so the town gets no news, and it's no wonder that they let themselves be deceived with any lies that please them."

*" Friday Evening, November 4, 1870.*

"I have been with two dignitaries of the Church to-day, the Archbishop of Posen, Ledochowski,<sup>3</sup> with whom I used to be acquainted. He looked me up as he could not see Count Bismarck at once. He did not find me, so after dinner I drove to see him, of course, partly out of politeness, and partly to take Bismarck's apologies to him for not being able to see him either to-day or to-morrow, because, between Thiers and the German Ministers, he really will have no time, and this is the absolute truth. This same apology I had to take to the Bishop of Versailles, who had called in vain on the Minister to-day. It was very interesting to me to see the two prelates one after the other. Ledochowski, who is an Italianized Pole, is by far the more refined and clever man, but the Bishop of Versailles made a very good impression

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<sup>1</sup> Also took part in the Communists' riots of 1871.

<sup>2</sup> Governor of Paris from August 17, 1870. Took a leading part in the defence of Paris until the Capitulation.

<sup>3</sup> Archbishop of Posen-Gnesen from 1866.



on me, a real old French Bishop, such as one sees in old prints and steel engravings."

*"Saturday Morning, November 5, 1870.*

"I must finish soon and take Bismarck's report of his interview with little Thiers yesterday. There is nothing to say about it yet, as you can fancy, and I can only call your attention to the newspapers which will be full of all sorts of gossip, true and false, but you will not be angry with me because I must leave you as well as the rest of the world, in the dark as to what may be true or untrue."

*"Afternoon.*

"I had time to ride with Count Hatzfeldt and Count Bohlen to Chaville after I had been to the King with the Minister's report, and with the deputation to the Grand Duke of Weimar. The Minister himself was engaged with visits, conferences, and then dinner with the King. Chaville is a small place half way to Sèvres, the celebrated porcelain factory, which has been destroyed. We met M. Thiers on the road who had driven to the outposts at eight o'clock this morning where he appointed some members of the Government to meet him with further instructions. He is to have another interview with the Minister this evening, when, of course, he will make known what instructions he received this morning. The greater part of the Government were taken prisoners at the rising of the Reds on the first, but were released by their colleagues, as you will see in the papers. Matters are getting livelier."

*"Sunday, November 6, 1870.*

"After supper, that is, half-past nine. We were not long at table, and I have been sitting by the fire in the salon until now, contrary to my custom. It was interesting to listen to the Minister relating his conversation with Thiers, details which I did not know. I knew the substance of the negotiations quite well, for the Minister has always told me in the evening, so that I could report them to the King before he (the Minister) got up, as the King, of course, was very impatient to hear them. But to-day he told us just what the negotiations were. Count Lehn-dorff and Count Dönhoff dined with us, and General von Tresckow came in after dinner, so he had a large audience.

"M. Thiers is, perhaps, the most educated and best informed man in France, and the most important question with him was that Paris is the jewel and centre of the whole civilised world which would support France and not allow it to be destroyed.

"But after all that had taken place, and all he had seen and known, he still could not realize the position.

"It would have been extremely interesting to have listened to the negotiations between the two men; little Thiers with his refined, squeaky voice, his neat, almost old-fashioned French manner, and the strong, soldierly Bismarck, who is his superior, not only in real thought and earnest solidity, but in craft and cleverness. Although Thiers wished us to allow Paris to be provisioned, he declared that it still contained large stores, whereupon Bismarck calmly said that we perhaps knew better than he who had only been there a short time; that the stores, in fact, would not last beyond January 31. The idea that we were prepared to wait till January 31, appeared to shock and surprise the little man so much, that he gazed about the room and never ventured to state that they would last that long. When one considers that this statesman and historian speaks no other language but French, for he knows no German, nor English, nor Italian, one can understand a good deal.

"The newspapers will have informed you of the result of the negotiations before this letter arrives. Thiers came at half-past two to-day, and was very dejected at having orders to break off negotiations and leave Versailles.

"They don't desire anything else. He had an interview at the outposts yesterday with members of the Government, who had afterwards to discuss matters with their colleagues in Paris, so he was only here for a short time, and not until midnight, as on former occasions. He still had hopes yesterday evening, but the refusal came to-day, so he will leave for Tours early to-morrow. We have not got much information concerning the latest events in Paris. The rising was quelled on the first, and then Trochu seems to have arranged a sort of plebiscite which voted for the present Government by a large majority; to obtain those votes, they took to bragging, not daring to agree to an armistice. I must tell you one thing about our German army which may not be in the papers; the Bavarians have repeatedly declared when praised for their fighting: 'Yes, if the Crown Prince had commanded us in '66, shouldn't we have cut down the Prussians.' Isn't that rather neat?

"The negotiations this week with Thiers are a special feature in the history of the campaign. They are all over now, and people will be asking what will happen next."

*"November 8, 1870.*

"I had to take something<sup>1</sup> to the King early this morning, for it had to be sent off by a messenger, and there were various

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<sup>1</sup> The report concerning the negotiations with Thiers, which Abeken drew up for Bismarck during the night.

things to be done with it. We have to enlighten the diplomatists and the world at large about Thiers' fruitless mission, and we wish to do so as soon as possible, so yesterday and to-day were rather fatiguing, but now, there will be some rest—for me, but for the poor Minister there is really none. What one single man can do is sometimes tremendous, and one ought to thank God that he can do it."

*" Wednesday Morning, November 9, 1870.*

" The King was very amusing at tea yesterday. All manner of despatches arrived, one concerning the enemy's movements on the Loire opposite General von der Tann's army. The King told us many things, and joked about his picture books from the library of St. Cloud. The Grand Duke of Weimar was also very entertaining. He has an incredible amount of information, and has many interests. . . . The Archbishop of Posen, Count Ledochowski, has made the long and tiring journey here in order to place the desires of the Roman Catholics regarding the Pope, before the King and Minister. We ought to recognize this personal discomfort of his, while, at the same time, it was a certain moral suffering for the King. Count Bismarck thinks there is an advantage in talking over things with a clever man for once, and thus assure himself as to what he can and cannot do, and to hear the other's opinion on what it is possible to do.

" Count Bismarck laughed at dinner at the accounts in the papers of the annoyance felt in Berlin about the armistice. You will have read our report of the negotiations, before you receive this letter. Bismarck wrote it all himself."

*" Evening.*

" Don't be worried about Bismarck's suspension of hostilities, and don't be wishing for Moltke's bombs before the time comes to use them. You are perfectly right that it is no cruelty to desire the bombardment, and I think, that although it will cost some lives, it will save many."

*" Friday Morning, November 11, 1870.*

" I notice that you in Berlin cannot conquer your anxiety lest Bismarck from too great cleverness will do something unwise and turn back from Paris. I think you do him an injustice, I mean, that I think he is just as much convinced as every one else, that this nation will be forced to play its last trump card. Things in 1866 were utterly different. We had reason to hope and we wished Austria to be grateful for our forbearance. We hoped and wished to be on good terms with her afterwards, and

to have a firm, faithful, and honourable alliance. This is possible between two chivalrous opponents who have no occasion to bear a grudge against one another when the victor has not treated the vanquished with scorn. Now it is different. We don't cherish hopes of good relations with France, although they dangled that bait before us from the moment of Louis Napoleon's fall. We are, indeed positively convinced that their one feeling will be hatred, anger, malice and revenge. It would fill the hearts of Frenchmen, *even if we were to withdraw to-morrow and leave them Lorraine and Alsace, and make them a present of the war expenses.* For this reason our only policy is to do them as little harm as possible, but to break their physical and moral courage. You are right that Austria declared herself vanquished, while the French have not done so. This is just it; they must know and feel that they have been conquered. This is my firm conviction. An old Latin verse runs thus: 'Est victor nemo, nisi victum victus se agnoscat,' which is: 'No one is conquered so long as the conquered do not acknowledge that they are conquered.' Napoleon used to revile the silly English whom he could not conquer, because they never knew when they were beaten, not when it would have been time for them to run. Under some circumstances this is great. Under present circumstances, it is only pride in France, and it would be well for them not to stifle all humane feeling and political forbearance in us, and for the Neutrals impracticable."

*"Saturday Morning, November 12, 1870.*

"I wished to go to bed betimes last night, but the Minister wrote me something which had to be despatched to-day, and which required me to 'make a report before it was sent.' At the same time he went to walk in the garden by the bright moonlight, and where he does not like to have a report made to him. When he goes out so late it is expressly to think without distraction. So I waited until he came up, and it was later than I thought.

"The band played a beautiful serenade for the Minister in the courtyard, and though late for me, is too early for him. When I asked his valet, Engel, if he was awake, he said no, but 'the music would soon waken him, so he might get up as it was past ten.' Yesterday was a great day for our servants, and very amusing to us, for they got uniforms. At first only we, the Councillors, wore uniform, and the clerks were very envious of those in the civil cabinet, for whom Wilmowski immediately got uniforms, and they have worn it here for three



weeks. Now the Chancellery servants have followed suite, and the entire staff are in uniform. It is practical during the war, and necessary here.

"The only person wearing plain clothes is Delbrück, and that is because he did not expect to be here so long. It is awkward for him, for sometimes he has difficulty in being let in when he goes to the King, if sentinel does not know him."

*"Evening, November 20, 1870.*

"From various signs, it really seems as if the generals in Paris were unable to get their men out now. Regiments of the line and the Garde Mobile find that they must and are nearly always expected to encamp outside, so that the National Guard could do duty. But the latter, to whom flags had been solemnly given last week, declared that 'it is not their duty to serve outside the town, as they are only required to keep order in Paris.' Besides this, they don't hear the guns of their Loire or 'Bretagne army,' which, instead of approaching Paris, is moving off in the opposite direction. In short, the poor people are to be pitied. Our outposts are very soft-hearted; in some places they stick up a broom when provisions come, so that the Frenchmen can come and get pea-sausage or bread. At other places the outposts look the other way when the French soldiers come to buy of the few people still living near them, and warn them when the patrol is coming. These are pretty traits of kindness in our men, and the officers wink at it all, for it does not decrease the want in Paris. By way of thanks the French outposts leave the Paris newspapers at given spots for our men to fetch them, with a line inside to say when another is to be fetched. This fraternization is a sign of the weakness of the fellows in the town. It was the same thing before Metz capitulated."

*"Monday Evening, November 21, 1870.*

"Tea was at half-past eight this evening, half-an-hour earlier than usual, and it was specially kind to invite me to hear the great tattoo in honour of the Crown Princess' birthday. It was beautifully played by the military bands. We assembled in the corridor to hear it, and there were many royalties present. After we were seated the Crown Prince showed some fine photographs from Egypt, including some new castles of the Khedive's, which were not built when I was there. I had a long conversation with the Hereditary Prince of Hohenzollern about Spain and Roumania. He is very agreeable. He said that 'now that the sword of Damocles no longer hung over his head, he could begin to take an interest in Spain.'"

"Keudell, Bohlen and I took advantage of a free hour while the Minister was holding a Conference, to ride in the park and watch the fountains play in celebration of the Crown Princess' birthday. The King came out, and just at that moment the sun appeared and the fountains began. The King was riding with a brilliant attendance of Princes and other officers. It was an interesting spectacle, and challenged comparison with the historic scenes of Louis XIV.'s brilliant court; ladies in their riding-habits, prelates and gay cavaliers, and Parisian holiday-makers, and our hero-King with his suite of Prussian officers and German Princes."

*"Tuesday Evening.*

"The Minister sent for me and I had to drive in a hurry to the King to get his consent to a telegram before tea. It was soon settled with the King, and when I left he laughed and said: 'Business is sharp to-night, Moltke has just left me.' And when I apologized for disturbing him so late, he laughed again, and added: 'We are here for that.'"

*"Wednesday Evening.*

"Affairs have just been settled with Bavaria, and have probably been settled with Würtemberg to-day in Berlin, and thus a German Federation has been formed out of the North German Federation, but, of course, the Constitution must be modified, and German unity is complete. The titles of Kaiser and Empire are still wanting, to be sure, but they will doubtless follow now that the deed is done, but to me, at least, they were never of any importance.

"It is a great step, and I hope it will be announced to-morrow in the Address, and the promise given that the treaties be laid before the Reichstag which must sanction them. Bavaria has, of course, made concessions as compared with the small states, which is but just and right. But on the whole, all essential matters, have, in my opinion, been attained. The Minister settled this with Bavaria. As Delbrück has been obliged to go to Berlin, the whole burden of everything has fallen upon the Minister, and it must have cost him several nights' work, and much strength. I can bear witness that he has borne it wonderfully. He has almost incomparable power of mind and strength of will, and is able to guide all the different shades of thought. All diplomatic arrangements concerning the war with France, the various negotiations with the German States, he has conducted, and also the Russian entanglement.<sup>1</sup> Added to all this, there

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<sup>1</sup> This referred to the alteration of the Treaty of Paris of 1856. Russia desired the withdrawal of the limitation of her ships of war to the Black Sea, and this was settled at the London Conference in 1871.

are the affairs of Prussia to which he must attend as Minister President; the administration of the conquered provinces, disputes between the military and civil authorities, and each separate thing occasioning a good deal of necessary and unnecessary anger. One can but wonder that he holds out."

*"Thursday Morning, November 24, 1870.*

"... You must be delighted as I am at the settlement with Bavaria, and we think that all essentials have been attained, and that the unessential will follow. I hope the Reichstag will recognize this also. There is very much to do in our office to-day in making copies of papers, telegrams, &c. The clerks have had to keep writing until half-past two last night to get the agreement ready for signature. 'Europe is waiting for you,' the Minister said.

"The Russian movement gives me, of course, a certain amount of writing. I had hoped for a moment that it would be handed over to a colleague, Bucher, but it has been given to me. Mon. Thiers, on the contrary, gave me little to do, and I was only busied in receiving verbal details late in the evening from the Minister, who had some tiresome hours' conference with the little man, which I had to report in my turn to the King next morning, the pleasantest part of the business."

*"Sunday Morning, November 27.*

"We were not once in a dangerous position, not even before the arrival of Prince Friedrich Karl.<sup>1</sup> Up to that time we were of course, cautious, not that we have become incautious. As to packing, we have done it half-a-dozen times at least, since we have been here; it is, indeed, our rule to do so whenever a sortie is expected, and occasionally we have expected one for certain, but a red note would always come; whether Trochu or Favre or the guns were hoarse, we don't know. That is, the infantry wished the National Guard to be under fire for once, while the latter did not wish it. Don't be anxious about the people in Versailles. We sometimes speak in fun about a S. Bartholomew's Eve in Versailles, but as a matter of fact, we are very cautious, particularly for the King, who is most incautious himself. There is, however, nothing to be anxious about now, and the most respectable families, ladies, and even children, are seen in the streets much more than at first.

"When I sometimes plead for leniency towards individuals, the reply is: 'They must feel what war is, that is the best means to make them demand peace.' I believe that one can go too far with this, and that the effect of this measure is not so great

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<sup>1</sup> After the Capitulation of Metz.

as is thought. A vigorous cannonade of the fortifications of Paris, that is of the isolated forts, would have far more effect than pressure on the people. The latter may have some result, but it is much slower and much more hateful."

*"Monday Morning, November 28.*

"News has just arrived of Manteuffel having yesterday successfully repulsed the French army of the North, and is but the preliminary of the looked for event. You cannot be in greater expectation in Berlin as to the developments of the next few days, than we are here. This long waiting in Versailles makes us and our troops very impatient."

*"Morning, November 29.*

"The Parisians have gone mad about the cannonading these last few days. We quietly listen to it because we know how little harm it does. Yesterday, for example, a report reached the King from the Bavarian Corps south of Paris, between us and the VIth Army Corps, that the Parisians had thrown 600 shells on the plateau they hold without doing further harm than slightly wounding a few men. When they use their powder up like this, one can be quite satisfied. The firing was furious last night, but in bed I heard nothing of it, and was only awakened by a noise in the house, and learned that the Minister had sent his cousin to the King at the Prefecture, to know if anything special had occurred. He returned shortly after and said that it was nothing, no alarm, only the usual marching out of troops to relieve the outposts.

"What would life be worth if we were to return without the fruits of victory. The fruits of victory must be the security of Germany against future wars, which can only be assured by obtaining Alsace and Lorraine, Strassburg and Metz, and with this material result the moral satisfaction to our people that these old German lands are returned to us. It would be a crime to the moral system of the world if the theft committed by the French were not expiated, not made good again. It would be a crime against the children themselves if they were not brought, even against their will to their real mother, the old home, but were left to their French step-mother and her corrupt influences. Not only our grandchildren, but their grandchildren, will thank us for educating them as Germans. You must not get weak and weary, and you must pray not only for peace, but for a just and good peace, and you must encourage us to be as strong as did the German women of old."



CHAPTER VIII  
THE PROCLAMATION OF THE EMPIRE  
1870

“ Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles.”

*To his Wife.*

“ VERSAILLES, *Morning, December 1, 1870.*

“ Garibaldi has not yet been taken, but he has been beaten. Your despatch seems to me to have been premature. I hardly wish him to be taken prisoner, chiefly because I am afraid we should treat him a little *ab irato*, and more according to his momentary aberration without considering his antecedents and character, which is that of an idealist, in a sense noble and pure, because he is not self-seeking. Even his ambition and undeniable vanity are rather naïve, a natural wild growth, and do not injure his enthusiasm. But one doesn't know what to wish for him. To die on the battle-field while serving such a cause is not a worthy close to life, and yet, how is he to live after his defeat, and the downfall of his cause for which he has compromised himself? It has been said here that he and the other Italian prisoners ought to be brought to Germany with a plate on their breasts with this inscription: ‘Thanks for Venice.’ I would send him quietly back to Caprera, and leave him there.”

“ *Evening.*

“ I was invited to dine with the King at six this evening, instead of at four, the usual hour. This suited the Minister very well, and I could make a report to the King directly after. He does not like me to do so in the evening, for he says it excites him and prevents him from sleeping. I always admire the way the King hears a report immediately after dinner. You know how he did this at Ems. It lasted rather longer to-day than I counted on, partly because I had so much to report, and partly because the King asked questions to which I could not give definite answers, which was my own fault. I left rather in a fright, for I knew I had been stupid, however, I ought to be thankful at having got off so easily. All of a sudden I saw that the King was surprised at something I told him, which

evidently the Minister had purposely not mentioned. This was very awkward indeed. I fancy I succeeded in making it plausible that the Minister had had good reasons for his tactfulness in keeping it from the King's knowledge, but I blamed myself for my indiscretion, and did not deserve either the King's or the Minister's kindness. I confessed my stupidity on my return. Neither of them were ungracious about it, not even the Minister, who took it quite calmly. I am grateful for his leniency, which atones for many other little vexations which he has caused me. At times he is particularly indulgent in grave and almost serious matters, but frightfully nervous about trifles. I trust this indiscretion of mine will not lead to further explanations. The Minister was perfectly right in not mentioning it to the King, and I was stupid to have been so indiscreet, for a second's consideration would have shown me."

*"Evening, December 2, 1870.*

"I heard the dull booming of guns in the garden, and I keep hearing it now. There have been some warm days, chiefly for the Würtemberg and Saxon troops, as you will see in the papers, and they have had many losses, but the French have lost a frightful number. They expected an immense deal from this sortie, it seems, and a proclamation from General Trochu and Ducrot,<sup>1</sup> received from Berlin to-day by telegraph, confirms this. It is thought here that they have played their last card in this unsuccessful attempt to break through our lines and join the army of the Loire at Fontaine.

"Count Hatzfeldt brings the latest news on his return from tea with the King. Though a hot day before Paris, there were no brilliant results. The French evidently wished to get out on the south-east, crossed the Marne<sup>2</sup> in large force, estimated at 80,000, drove our troops back, winning and losing several places,<sup>3</sup> and finally made good their position on the heights this side of the Marne. To-morrow will be another hot day, for they must be driven back into Paris. My remark about the unsuccessful attack was rash. God grant it may prove true to-morrow.

"But Count Hatzfeldt brought news of another victory: the defeat of the army of the Loire by the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg. They were driven back between Chateaudun and Orleans."

*"Sunday Evening after tea. December 3, 1870.*

"Good news direct from our side of the Loire has just come, also some very odd news from the French side. . . ."

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<sup>1</sup> Escaped from Sedan and led the great sortie of November 30th—December 3rd.

<sup>2</sup> At Joinville.

<sup>3</sup> Champigny and Brie.

*"Monday Morning, December 5, 1870.*

"An interruption of a sort that one likes. Colonel Bronsart of the General Staff has been here with the official announcement that Prince Friedrich Karl has completely beaten the army of the Loire yesterday, and Orleans is in our possession again. Further, the sortie returned to Paris,<sup>1</sup> and humanly speaking, the decision lies there. It is important for the Parisians to learn as soon as possible that their hopes in the army of the Loire are in vain, and with that their hearts fall into the Seine.

"It will be announced in the Reichstag to-day that the German Princes wish to restore the German Empire and to have our dear, old King as Kaiser. The King of Bavaria's letter will be read out to-day. The Master of the Horse, Count Holnstein, brought it on Saturday, and it was presented to the King by Prince Leopold of Bavaria before dinner. The King is, of course, touched, and has not been able to give an answer, because the consent of the other Princes must be forthcoming first. Those here, Baden, Oldenburg, Weimar and Coburg, have already telegraphed their consent to the King of Bavaria. The Grand Duke of Mecklenburg and some others date their consent from the battle-field of Orleans. I am almost sorry for the old sovereign to change his title, the one he loves, and is dearer to him than any other. But the Imperial dignity has many advantages and is now the right thing, and must not be misunderstood."

*"Wednesday Morning, December 7, 1870.*

"We almost give up hopes of hearing our own great guns, although the last sortie proved how foolish it was not to have put ourselves in the position to bombard. It would have spared much human life if we could have made a diversion with our growlers. There is a good deal to be said as to our not having begun the bombardment, but not to be written. Besides the military reasons, the soundness and sincerity of which I cannot judge, other influences have been at work into which it is better not to enter. They must be good, but we should have attained our object sooner if we had begun the bombardment sooner. You are quite right in saying the French have been able to bring together such a large force by the Loire owing to our hesitation, but the country will be more injured thereby, and less able to carry on the war. It is unfortunately true, that not only the strength but the weakness of the enemy is the present security for peace. If we had concluded a hasty peace after

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<sup>1</sup> After great losses on both sides the French returned to Paris on December 3rd.

Sedan with an authorized Government, which would have surrendered Alsace and Lorraine, the fury would have been such as Bismarck predicted in his Circulars of the 13th and 16th, at Rheims and Meaux, or as Ducrot said: the 'sourde rage qui m'anime,' that the country which remains with unexhausted resources, would have risen up to avenge the loss of the provinces and attempt their recovery. This cannot be the case now, or in this protracted war, the country's resources are exhausted and both men and money gone. It will require a long time for them to recover and think of another war. Even the 400,000 troops we shall have to release, will be in no hurry for revenge and another war. They will be only too glad to stay at home by their own firesides. God may not have wished us to have made peace directly after Louis Napoleon was taken, and his Government dissolved, chiefly by the treachery of Trochu."

*To Herr von Olfers.*

"VERSAILLES, December 7, 1870.

"We venture to hope for a speedy decision now. Some days last week were full of suspense. The first days of December will be less noteworthy in history than the bloody days of August before Metz.

"It was no trifle to stay here and listen to the cannonade of the great sortie from Paris, and wait for news from the Loire. Our beloved King himself felt it greatly, and on the Sunday evening after the suspense was happily over, he said to me that he had been in such violent agitation during the night that he was afraid of getting ill. His anxiety as to the result caused him, perhaps, more suffering than any one else, but he has rapidly recovered and looks quite well and cheerful, and both Lauer and his valet assure me that he is quite well.

"You will have been as much annoyed about the Reichstag as we were, but the whole Chamber will have more wisdom than the single speaker. You agree with me about the Kaiser and Empire titles; but without being enthusiastic as to the change of titles, it will be both wise and effective, coming thus from the German Princes. It makes me think of our dear Friedrich Wilhelm IV. whose tact and noble feeling made him refuse the Imperial crown when it was offered to him by the revolutionary Assembly at Frankfort, and who could never have dreamed that it would be offered to his brother by the German Princes."

"VERSAILLES, December 8, 1870.

"Do you cherish hopes in a tiny corner of your heart about Christmas? I don't wish to say anything about it. Many



people here think the preliminaries of peace will be settled before Christmas, and that the King both for his own sake and that of his people, will return home, and leave the rest to his generals. Bismarck and all of us, must, of course, go with the King, for the drawing up of the peace negotiations will be done in Berlin. Many reasonable people hold this opinion, but I do not venture to count upon it, though I don't like to crush your hopes any more than I like to encourage them.

"Your sympathy with my vexation at my own clumsiness about that report to the King, touches me. I can tell you now what it was about. The looked-for arrival of Count Holnstein with a letter from the King of Bavaria proposing the assumption of the Imperial Crown by our King. Count Holnstein had been at Versailles for a few days before this, and the King did not know that he had any other object than to ascertain about stabling for horses, and possibly for a residence for King Ludwig himself. He did not imagine his return on such a mission after his sudden departure which had somewhat surprised him. The next morning, however, the King sent us a note from the Grand Duke of Baden which stated that Gelzer had telegraphed from Munich and Count Holnstein was coming with a letter from the King of Bavaria asking him to accept the Imperial Crown. The Minister was right to say nothing to the King beforehand, and his silence did not annoy his Majesty when he had a laughing explanation with him on the subject, nor was he angry with me, but thanked me kindly the first evening for having given him time to think the matter over.

"Count Holnstein gave the King of Bavaria's letter to Prince Leopold, who had arrived on the 3rd, and by him it was presented to the King. The Grand Duke of Baden said to me the evening after how gratified he was that it had taken place on his wife's birthday for she was so justly proud of her father. The Grand Duke had taken a good deal of trouble to obtain the consent of the other Princes. . . . He drove to those who were here and telegraphed to those who were away with the army, and then announced the result at Munich. Perhaps you have been thinking about poor Friedrich Wilhelm IV. as I have, whom we will not forget with all our love and respect for his successor. The restoration of the Imperial dignity was the dream of his life. It was un-Prussian for him to have thought of it not for Prussia, but for Austria; that he did not desire it for himself, was disinterested and magnanimous, but that he did desire it, was altogether German. It was not merely wise, but genuine tact, indeed, more than that, it was a noble and pious

feeling which prompted him to decline it when Simson brought him the offer of it from the Frankfort Parliament, because it was not an expression of the representative German nation. A stronger and more covetous man than he would have accepted it, and done wrong, and it would not have been a blessing. Had it not been for that, the Princes and nation would not now have made this offer to the brother of that noble Prince."

"Evening.

"While we were sitting round the fire a telegram came from Berlin, announcing the second reading of the agreement with Bavaria, and the final arrangements about the Empire and Kaiser. The Minister had a bottle of champagne brought for us, Hatzfeldt, Bucher and I, and Wollmann, our chief clerk, to drink to the Kaiser and Empire. Keudell had, unfortunately gone home.

"There are fifteen guns now on the north side of the castle, in front of the equestrian statue of Louis XIV., all captured on the Loire by the dauntless blow of the 22nd Division, on the 2nd or 4th of December, and sent on here at once. Many of our soldiers were looking at them, and some Frenchmen as well. My colleague, Bucher, who was there before us, heard the Frenchmen say: 'Ah bah! on les a transportés ici de Strasbourg, pour nous faire croire!' One really must admire such inventiveness and ingenuity in the people in thus deceiving themselves.

"Prince Putbus dined with us, and I was greatly pleased with his unpretentious and quiet manner. I never look at him without feeling for him in the loss of his wife to whom he was devoted. When we were at coffee Bismarck urged him to take up politics, his position demanded it. He said he had not learnt enough for that career. I quoted a remark in Disraeli's *Lothair*,<sup>1</sup> to the effect that it was only those who had learnt nothing who would be useful in the world, that is, who had learnt nothing from books.

"Bismarck used to be classed with such people, but wrongly. There must have been periods in his life when he read and learnt an enormous amount, especially from history, legal and political,

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<sup>1</sup> "Do not regret it," said Mr. Phœbus. "What you call ignorance is your strength. By ignorance you mean a want of knowledge of books. Books are fatal; they are the curse of the human race. . . . The greatest misfortune that ever befell man was the invention of printing. Printing has destroyed education. . . . Men should live in the air; their exercise should be regular, varied and scientific. . . . What I admire in the order to which you belong is that they do live in the air, that they excel in athletic sports; that they can only speak one language; and that they never read. This is not a complete education, but it is the highest education since the Greek."—TR. *Lothair*, chapter xxix.

for he knows an immense deal, not desultory knowledge, but systematically and connectedly. In other directions he has not read much, particularly in belles lettres, but his good memory serves him in other things, while of political affairs he is and remains a master. Every moment some genial trait appears in the course of work which is very pleasing. It is a pity he has had no regular training in official work, never in an office, and has not even been secretary to a Legation, but was made Minister all at once. It would then have been pleasanter to have worked under him."

*"Morning, December 9, 1870.*

"I have just come from the King. I had to explain several matters connected with management of Imperial affairs in the Reichstag which were not clear to him. His humility is touching. It was, indeed, not necessary to assure me that he had not ambitiously sought the Imperial crown. I said that I could be called as a witness that he had known nothing of the preparations for this. I had to contradict him in regard to certain formalities, for which I afterwards begged him to pardon me. 'That was your duty,' he kindly replied."

*"Saturday Morning, December 10, 1870.*

"... Such a war, with all its sacrifices, and all its victories has never taken place before in the history of the world. You can fancy how painfully the King felt the sacrifices, and how little he is moved by the brilliancy of the Imperial crown, although history does not record such unanimity between Princes and people as has been displayed by this offer of a crown. I remarked to him yesterday, that the offer of the Imperial crown was almost the same in his case as it was in that of Heinrich der Vogler, who was surprised by it when bird-catching. 'Yes,' he replied, 'the spot is still shown where it happened.' The messenger has met him, (the King), in the midst of war, which is better than if he had been engaged in bird-catching.

*"Evening.*

"I had to go to the King three times to-day, and the third time I went in fear and trembling, for I had been sent off on the second occasion, in the greatest disgrace, at least, the King had retired to his bedroom in great excitement and displeasure. I had scarcely returned and made my report to the Minister when a telegram, written by the King himself, arrived which the Minister was to despatch in cypher, but which he did not wish to do, so he again sent me to the King to persuade him not to send it. It was not a pleasant duty. It was easier than I

anticipated. The King was touching in his kindness and goodness, so I was able to tell the Minister of my success. It removed a load from my heart. I never saw the King so angry and excited, and yet so open to every argument and remonstrance.

"It was, perhaps, well that indisposition prevented the Minister from going to the King himself, for the King could give way to his vexation more easily towards me, while I could act as intermediary, and soften some things, and be silent about others. I do not, after all, regret this day. The Minister does not spare the King for he does not spare himself. It was not even a matter of any very great importance, indeed a mere form, but that sort of thing can often be very annoying."

"Tuesday Morning, December 13, 1870.

"I have just returned from making a long report to his Majesty, a very quiet affair this time. I had the pleasure of reading a German translation of two very fine English articles to him. You may possibly have come across them in a German newspaper: they are the leading articles in *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* of December 8th. The latter is very good in its remarks concerning Prussia having come into her rights, and urges that the title of King of Prussia should be retained with that of Kaiser. This particularly pleased the King, to whom it has been so difficult to assume the Imperial title. I also heartily agree. The last article spoke very well of the King. The two articles are particularly pleasant coming from abroad, especially from England, where feeling has been strained and unfriendly of late.

"It has been a rare occurrence in history for a new Empire to have arisen and a new title assumed which have met with such favourable acceptance abroad."

"December 15, 1870.

"I was talking to Keudell in the garden yesterday about the small chance of Count Bismarck getting any immediate rest from his trying work. It is impossible for him to hand over any part of it to others, besides, there is, unfortunately, no one to whom he could make it over, though it is merely the formal work of establishing the new German Empire in the family of European States, nor will it demand much labour. It has fought for and made its own place, and it will generally be welcomed with confidence, and, indeed, with satisfaction, as a guarantee of peace and quiet. I do not anticipate any conflicts abroad. By the



madness of her leaders France is depriving herself of the means of revenging herself on us. But in regard to our internal affairs! The new provinces must be Germanized, and this will require a mixture of strength and gentleness which even Bismarck, I fear, does not possess. Germany must be constitutionally united and be made an organic, living whole. Care must, therefore, be taken that the strict, firm, energetic tone in Prussia pervades the rest of Germany, especially the army. That the officials should be penetrated by a love of duty and aptitude for work, and an end put to the indifferent and careless ways peculiar to the small States without introducing red-tape-government-narrowness, and without driving away what is human and free. There must be introduced into the interior next to excellence in state-government, the freedom of self-government. And within the churches, even within each separate Confession, how much remains to be solved. I do not speak of the tasks to be accomplished in art and science, these flowers of life come of themselves if they are encouraged and offered the means of existence. And so it must be in regard to the Church, though the position of the Roman Catholic Church will be a difficulty with the Government."

"Saturday Morning, December 17, 1870.

"You will probably have read Benedetti's letter with more care than I have. The end caught my eye and what he says of Count Bismarck's *déloyauté*. The rest seems to me moderate, and the King remarked, (he always reads things very closely), that on the whole it was correct and very temperate; it was true *qu'il n'y avait pas d'insulte ni insulté*, but he hides his own arrogance which made him demand again and again the King's declaration regarding the future, and on the King's refusal to make it, say: *Votre Majesté me permettra donc d'écrire*, writing the very opposite of what the King had said, so that the King had at last to put him down somewhat sharply."

"Sunday, after Church, December 18, 1870.

"No one knows better how to find his way to one's heart than the King. I enclose a little note from him which I found on my return from church which has touched and gratified me. Take good care of it. Some one in Switzerland took it into his head to send an open letter to Bismarck enclosed to the King with the request that it might be given to the Minister. The writer touches upon his great responsibility to God and man, and warns

him in the words of Solomon that : ' Vanité des Vanités—tout est Vanité.' ”<sup>1</sup>

“ It was a harmless thing such as the Minister often receives, some of which are more strongly expressed, and which he throws into the waste-paper basket.

“ But the King in his kind consideration, thought it might be unpleasant to the Minister, hence his note to me, which was sent with the order that if I should be at church, it was not to be sent after me. I have, of course, told the Minister, who was greatly touched, and desired me to express his gratitude to the King, which I did when I thanked him on my own account. I am to go to tea this evening, and am glad to be able to thank him verbally.”

*“ Monday Evening, December 19, 1870.*

“ On my return from my ride about five this afternoon, the Minister was just driving out of the gate to go to dinner with the King, and called out to me to lend him the star of the Red Eagle, which I did without hesitation, and it only occurred to me afterwards, that I might lose it, as the King intended to decorate President Simson and would use it for that purpose. It would be no joke to me to lose it, for it was bestowed upon me by the King's own hand on an important occasion, and I drove to tea to the King's in a very ill-humour, making all sorts of plans for getting back my star from Simson, who would hold on to it as he too would have received it from the King. The King said to me at tea, with a laugh : ‘ I have given your star to Simson to-day, but I told him afterwards that he should receive another, as that one was only lent.’ Simson replied : ‘ Oh, your Majesty, I cannot give it back after receiving it from your own hand, which makes me value it greatly.’ Then the King said :

“ ‘ Yes, but I have also given it with my own hand to Abeken, and he sets great store by it also.’ He described the whole scene at the railway station, whereupon Simson said : ‘ Then I must, of course, resign it.’

“ Was it not charming of the King ? I was delighted to have the opportunity of thanking him in person this morning, and saying that I had received the star twice from his hand.”

*“ December 21, 1870.*

“ Lauer dined with us ; he is always a welcome guest, for he is so pleasant and friendly. His conversations with the

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<sup>1</sup> The note to Abeken contained these words in the King's handwriting : “ Is it advisable to trouble the Minister in his nervous state of health, with the enclosed, or ought it to go into the fire ? ” W. 18. 12. 70.

Minister always amuse me. He frequently and half jokingly takes up the Minister's intellectual paradoxes, softens and moderates them, and in his easy, quiet way, gravely discusses them.

"The struggle with life has not robbed him of his gentleness, and in the midst of the atmosphere of the Court, he has remained a really impartial, straightforward man with whom it is always pleasant to be.

"I amused the King at tea in recounting all sorts of devices for sending cypher telegrams, and how people purposely give decypherers much annoyance by diffuse repetitions, just as Bismarck was telling the Crown Prince yesterday of having done so to revenge himself upon the writers of stupid, awkward messages in cypher, &c. He also alluded to our energetic cyphering at Ems."

*"Christmas Eve.*

"Here I am surrounded by your gifts! Your little bowl is here. Guess what I put into it first, the Iron Cross the King sent me to-day. He sent it to the Minister immediately after I had come from making my report to him, and he had it put under my table napkin at dinner, my seat being by him. When I saw what it was I looked at the Minister in surprise, and he smilingly said:—

"'His Majesty is the Father Christmas.' It was a surprise, and I should not be sincere if I did not say that it greatly pleased and touched me. God makes allowance for us all, and the King and Bismarck must be forbearing with me, especially when I am not able to lighten his burdens and help him as much as I should like to. *But it is a happiness to be a fellow-worker at this great time.*

"We had a Christmas tree, indeed, two, a small one Countess Bismarck sent her husband, and a large one Keudell got and had decorated and lighted up.

"I had just sat down when the Minister sent for me and he and I were busy writing to carry out a good idea of his in a hurry, until the last moment before dinner, and he worked after dinner as well, so that our excellent office was kept busy copying the despatches for the Messenger to take away at half-past eight."

*"Evening. Christmas Day.*

"Bismarck was greatly amused about the article you mention in the *Fremdenblatt*, and remarked: 'if only it were true that he got up at eight o'clock, or worked in bed!' But it would be well for people to think so, though he himself knew that he

was not visible before eleven. Where do people get their news? You know it is not true. He never eats at the Hôtel des Réservoirs, but at five o'clock with us, often excusing himself from dining even with the King. The Princes, the Prince of Hohenzollern, the Prince of Augustenburg and others dine there at six. The Minister goes out very little; he generally works until meal-time, unless he has to report something to the King about four, or goes to the Minister of War, or some one else, or more rarely, takes a ride. He sits some time before the fire after dinner, then retires to his room, seldom leaving it till late tea and stays then half-an-hour."

*"Tuesday Morning. December 27, 1870.*

"We have begun to make our siege-guns speak. I heard such continued firing on going into the garden at about half-past eight this morning, shot after shot, that I said to myself that they were not from the French guns, but were our siege-guns.

"Mont Avron Redoubt, on which the next attack will be directed, is quite east of Paris, but we distinctly hear what is going on there . . ."

*"December 29, 1870.*

"Count Hatzfeldt has very kindly just come up to tell me the good news, that Mont Avron was taken by our troops this morning without any struggle beyond some feeble shots in reply to our guns. It was the great and brilliant work of our artillery. . . .

"I had to go to the King about four o'clock and to the Crown Prince directly after at five, for he wished to ask me all sorts of questions concerning the Kaiser, Empire, titles and arms."

*"Friday, December 30, 1870.*

"You must not count upon a triumphal entrance. There are too weighty and serious considerations against ending with any such show, and it is wiser and more discreet to take the forts and remain outside, and dominate Paris from them. But she must be prostrate at our feet, (she herself has not wished it otherwise), before there is an end of the war."

*"SYLVESTER ABEND. New Year's Eve.*

"In how many and different places have I spent this season! But this is the most wonderful and the grandest of all, because the strangeness of it does not concern myself alone, but the great ones of the world, every one, in fact. First in my father's quiet home amid the friends of early years, then at the University, then



in Rome, that great city, in which my lot was cast ; then I spent it under the desert palms in the East, and lastly with your home circle in Berlin. That New Year's Eve when we were in doubt, and yet knew and said to ourselves that we belonged to one another. . . .

“ The New Year of 1866 was the beginning of a new era for me, and since then we have had four years together of lasting happiness, glad to be able to look calmly forward to the future, as we looked back to the past, in our dear circle and in the quiet of our own house. And now a New Year is coming upon us in the midst of storms, with hopes and fears, longing for one another and conscious that we share the longing and that we are one. The sunlight of love and hope beams upon us in the stormy night, and together we hope for a happy to-morrow.

“ When walking in the park with an old Russian lady, the wife of General Pankratieff, the King replied to her entreaty : ‘ O, Sire, donnez nous la paix.’

“ ‘ Dear lady, it is with peace as with marriage, it takes two to make it. I am ready to make it but the other side is not.’ ”

## CHAPTER IX

### THE BOMBARDMENT OF PARIS—THE KAISER PROCLAIMED—THE CAPITULATION OF PARIS

1871

“ Deutsches Herz verzage nicht.”

“ *January 1, 1871.*

“ Notwithstanding the punch and pfannkucken at the King’s last evening, the tone was rather a grave one. Some very interesting things were read aloud, including a newspaper of the 30th, which had been got out of Paris surreptitiously. Our bombardment of Fort Avron and its significance received a more brilliant notice than in our own reports, and the handling of our artillery was represented in a much more brilliant light. To the King’s surprise and ours, we learnt that the French lost four officers and had thirteen wounded, and during the whole day we only had four killed and nineteen wounded. . . . Great praise was bestowed on the National Guard for its action ; at a considerable sacrifice it formed a chain round the troops to aid and protect their retreat.

“ I drove to church with Keudell and Delbrück this morning, and while waiting in the Castle square for the King we offered our good wishes to the Princes, including the Crown Prince, who said we should have advanced still further by this time, by which he meant the proclamation of the King as Kaiser, and had it been possible the crown should have been placed on his head. He was annoyed because his father would not hear of it. I replied that I thought we might be satisfied at having got as far as we had. Then the King came wearing his plain paletot. We went to the great *Galérie des Glaces* to offer our good wishes, officers and higher officials. It is magnificent and extends the entire length of the middle front of the castle. One side is covered with mirrors, and from the other side there is a superb view over the park. The pictures and statues and the throng of brilliant uniforms made an imposing spectacle, recalling what must have been the splendours of Louis XIV.’s

Court. The King's little speech was very nice, he alluded to the gallantry, troubles and fatigues which had been the means of bringing us there. He hoped for the same in the new year, and though the end was not in view, he trusted in his army, and with God's blessing he would go on until we had a blessed peace. He spoke to various people afterwards, shook hands warmly with me and dismissed us all in a cheerful frame of mind.

"The result of our bombardment of Mount Avron had got known meantime, and every one felt encouraged."

*"Sunday Evening."*

"The King is now constitutionally Kaiser but he does not care to be proclaimed yet, nor can he be properly owing to some ridiculous little embarrassments concerning the titles, at which we laugh. For example, on January 1st, we had to call our office the Imperial German Foreign Office. The Foreign Office of the North German Federation will not do now, as there is no North German Federation, but a German Empire. And yet we cannot speak of the Empire as long as the Kaiser does not appear as such. In any case, we are no longer North German, but German, which is far better. A year ago I was a good deal vexed because instead of being in the Royal Prussian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, we became the Foreign Office of the North German Federation. It would have annoyed me less had I known that it would only last a year, and we should rapidly turn from the North German Foreign Office to the German Foreign Office. The Crown Prince thinks externals of much importance, such as names, titles, arms, colours, and urges the proclamation of the Empire with all its state. He feels that no one has given it to us or could have given it to us, and since we have conquered and won it for ourselves, we should, without further delay, stand before the world in the proper light. The King, on the other hand, dismisses all these external matters with a certain nervousness, and Bismarck does the same as if they were but a trifle, or premature. The King dislikes all the changes from his old customs. But settled they must be, and such things have an influence in the world, and Bismarck is really treating these matters too cavalierly.

"The French seem rather anxious since we began to bombard. They evacuated a number of positions yesterday, so that only a few of our shells fell amongst them. Till we began they had got into careless habits, and all the shooting was on their side, but since we commenced firing they respect us."

"January 3, 1871. *Morning.*

"Our army deserves our admiration for having stood the test of delay and long waiting after the excitement of the battle-fields from Wörth to Sedan, Metz and Paris, and going on working and fighting on the Loire and elsewhere. The violence of enthusiasm passes away, it is but human. For although enthusiasm itself is something divine, the word implying that the divine is filling one, the divine enters earthly things, and the human breast only for a time, like a ray of light that passes. This is the form of enthusiasm that is tinged with the earthly. I have more confidence in a quiet, earnest, humble piety. Still in the zenith of piety, the heart is filled with the divine. I say it of all earthly things, except love; with that the divine dwells in and with us."

"*Evening.*

"A few letters got out of Paris again to-day which are indeed pitiful. A bushel of potatoes costs five louis d'or, a whole cat eight thalers, and other things in proportion. The Government gave away pease and coffee for the celebrations of New Year's Day. Trochu has withdrawn all the troops between the forts outside the city, where they had been until now, and has quartered them in houses because so many of them were frozen. One could almost pity the poor creatures if one did not pity one's own soldiers still more. And if they were really fighting for their country and not for a silly *point d'honneur* about the cession of territory. Every country has had to do it and without loss of honour. The Crown Prince justly remarked that he had often asked himself whether any hereditary ruler could coldly look on at the ruin of his country and the waste of life, for the sake of such a *point d'honneur*, as these adventurers are doing."

"January 5, 1871. *Thursday Morning.*

"The bombardment began in earnest to-day, and shot is following shot. It was to have begun yesterday but the fog made it impossible to go on. . . .

"The last letters from Paris state that the privation is greatly felt. A foreign diplomat compares this last New Year's Day with those of years gone by, when the city was full of gaiety, while now it is cold and dark, and colder still indoors, the only vehicles in the dismal streets are ambulances conveying the wounded . . . with the determination to wait. Which gives rise to the fear lest the Red party kept down so far with difficulty, may break out, and the situation in France become that of another Reign of Terror and the guillotine, as in 1793. This



Terror could, however, not last long as our shells would soon and decisively speak. The idea of retreating to Mont Valérien is attributed to Trochu, who has collected an enormous amount of provisions there. He thinks he can exercise great influence on the fate of France from that spot, just as Bazaine thought he could do it at Metz. I hope it will be as illusory as Bazaine's proved to be."

*"Morning, 7th.*

"The King was touched by something I took him yesterday. A lady at Stuttgart wrote to Count Bismarck that it was a Suabian custom to draw a text from a lottery on New Year's Eve, for those whom the heart held dear, and she had drawn one for King Wilhelm, 'Our Kaiser,' which was very applicable to him; it was from Haggai, ii. 10. It is a beautiful and suitable text, and the King was pleased, and he commanded his thanks to be sent to her."

*"January 8, 1871.*

"To the Grand Duke of Baden at half-past eleven, in reference to the chance of peace—Metz—what to do when Paris falls—dissensus—what remedy—government of Alsace—title. To make my report to the King at four; Request the expediting of the naval report,—read a letter to the Minister of War, about 2800 oxen—'quite exhausted me'—'oh no, nothing does that.' The King touched. Also about the delay in getting news."

*"January 9, 1871.*

"All the soldiers gave a loud hurrah at five o'clock this morning when they heard the first shot. The non-commissioned officer who directed it, did not send it on the fort opposite, but with an increased charge, towards Paris. He had sworn that the first shot should be into Paris, 'Order or no order.'

"Many people wish to demand the old crown from Vienna,<sup>1</sup> but I am not in favour of this. Let the dead bury their dead. And to many others it is not right that the new Empire is not to take its place in the world with the greatest pomp and solemnity. They desire a coronation and all that appertains to such a solemnity, at least a solemn act of state by the Princes. To me, on the contrary, it is better for everything to take place as quietly as possible. Goethe once said that all beginnings should be in quiet, and I have always considered it practically wise."

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<sup>1</sup> The crown of Charlemagne.

*"Friday Morning, January 13, 1871.*

"Don't get impatient. Many good souls here imagined that the commencement of the bombardment would also be the end. The King said to me at first that he only expected any decided result in the course of twelve days or a fortnight.

"The worst thing about our victories always is the mass of prisoners. Without counting that of yesterday, there were in the last week some 10,000 prisoners, and many more will have been added yesterday. What is to be done? And now, when Paris falls, where there are some 150,000 troops of the line, without reckoning the Garde Mobile, and the National Guard!"

*"Sunday Evening.*

"Before I had done my work the Minister came in with more. Before I had begun the first or could finish it, I was constantly interrupted. Suddenly it was said that he had gone to bed at an unusually early hour. He went to bed early yesterday also, and could not, therefore sleep, but thought, and at three o'clock, and at five o'clock, he had a secretary called and each time dictated a telegram. His mind is so restless, that even if at times it is inconvenient, and sometimes does harm, it is really a great one. Without this restlessness he would not be capable of any great achievement. This evening as I was hastily writing the last word in order to be ready for to-morrow's work, favourable news from the General Staff arrived, about the pursuit of the enemy flying westwards. I read it with those of our colleagues present, and looked it up on the map."

*"Morning, 17th.*

"Important news has come, which you must have had, but it may have made little impression because it concerned the defensive work. General von Werder kept Bourbaki's Lyons army three times larger than his own, at bay, and has beaten it. Our military people consider it a very decisive performance which will have important results. They had been anxiously watching Bourbaki's advance to fight Werder and relieve the fortress of Belfort, retake Alsace and cross the Rhine into Germany, which would break our connection. It was a well thought-out plan. Our army of the South under General von Werder was not strong, yet notwithstanding, that excellent plan was frustrated. Manteuffel may arrive with a new army corps in a few days, but all our anxiety has vanished, for we see, that even without him General von Werder can hold out against the enemy. Hence the decisiveness of this news.

"The Ordensfest will be celebrated to-morrow, it has not

been celebrated since January 18th, 1701, and who then could have dreamed of this celebration ? ”

*“ January 18, 1871.*

“ The 18th of January 1701 has turned out a better day than could have been expected. Then there was, indeed, so much paltry vanity, such weak, childish ambition in the begging for and craving a King’s crown, but now how much blessing has been wrought by this Prussian crown, for Prussia and for Germany, in the hundred and seventy years which have passed ! . . . Who could have dreamed when Friedrich I. begged and bought the kingly crown from Austria, that his successor would place the Imperial crown, fallen from Austria, on his own head, and in the Palace of Versailles surrounded by his Marshals and victorious leaders, after the overthrow of proud France, at the head of such an army as Louis XIV. never saw. This was a great moment, every one was deeply moved, the King, perhaps most of all, though his heart was not full of rejoicing, like the others. It was hard for him. He said to me after dinner : ‘ Well, it was simple and dignified and good this morning, quite in a soldierly way.’ The one who was filled with delight was the Crown Prince, as was right at his age. . . . It was very touching when he dropped on his knee this morning before his father and kissed his hand.

“ We assembled in the long *Galérie des Glaces* this morning . . . the altar was placed in the centre, the King opposite during service. The colours riddled by shot were arranged at the end of the gallery, and comprised the old Prussian flag, the Bavarian, Saxon and Würtemberg flags. It was a proud sight. We civilians stood near the platform on which the flags were placed, and the King stood there after service to read his address to the Princes ; then at his command the Imperial Chancellor read the proclamation to the German people ; it is very beautiful. I say so for I had no hand in drawing it up. Bismarck wrote the best part, and it was excellent. After this the Princes saluted the King, and the Grand Duke of Baden, one of the best of men who has done much good here, cried ‘ Hoch ’ to his Kingly Majesty our Kaiser Wilhelm. I shall in all likelihood never hear such a hoch again. How it rang out, it was overpowering. . . .

“ It was unfortunately cloudy, but it cleared a little during the reading of the proclamation. . . .

“ ‘ Now thank we all our God ’ was sung magnificently with accompaniment on the trombone. The guns could not be fired because the west wind would have carried the sound to Paris,

and the difference between them and the bombarding guns, would have been easily known. . . .

"The dinner was at the King's residence at the Prefecture, and I had a good place opposite some interesting generals."

*"Thursday Morning, January 19, 1871.*

"It's a fabulous bit of good luck that Trochu's sortie came off to-day instead of yesterday, for all the commanders of the besieging army, even many commanders of battalions were here, and the consequences might have been very disagreeable. Fancy the sortie being announced during the celebration. . . .

*"January 20, 1871.*

"Our house was greatly honoured to-day, his Majesty the Kaiser, with his Imperial Highness the Crown Prince, came to consult about a special matter. . . .

"They arrived while we were at table, and Count Bismarck showed the two gentlemen into his little reception-room . . . the conference did not last long, and then the Kaiser came to our room. . . he said he must have a look over the house himself.

"The French retired into Paris after the fight to-day, leaving such a dreadful number of dead and wounded that they asked for a truce to attend to them this evening, but did not get it."

*"Sunday Morning, January 22.*

"A Paris newspaper of the 19th was read aloud at the Kaiser's yesterday evening, but it was new enough. There were all manner of admissions in it, and some rumours were corrected, as for example, it says that the animals in the Jardin des Plantes have neither been killed nor eaten, but are carefully looked after, although a lioness had died from eating the bad meat now given to the animals. Good meat is, of course, kept for the people. An article praising the *pain bis* now eaten in Paris was tragi-comic. It is made of wheat flour, bran and rice, hard fare for the fastidious Parisians, after their beautiful white bread. This new bread was recommended in high-sounding terms, as the beginning of a new era, the Republican bread of labour and of the earnest man, and a means towards the regeneration of France."

*"Evening.*

"The bombardment of the north side of Paris began yesterday, and it will have some effect on the Parisians. The news of the acceptance of the Bavarian agreement in the Bavarian Landtag arrived yesterday, by two votes over the necessary two-thirds majority. It was very pleasant news, for the small majority



proves the uncertainty of the affair. It settles everything, and the German Empire is now a *fait accompli*. The impression, especially abroad, would have been bad if there had been any disunion and the Bavarian Landtag would have had to be dissolved and a better Chamber elected. So every one was pleased at the news yesterday evening.

"It is a great step. I wonder if there is any idea in Paris of what has happened this week. Some persons must know, for our papers here are always sent in to Paris. The great public, of course, learns nothing about it. The Government sees to it that little news of our victories gets known from our papers which are suppressed. I should like it to be known in honour of our ruler, even if it is not believed. If they believed it they would have to conclude that further resistance was useless. It is a frightful sin to sacrifice so much blood in vain.

"Our correspondence with Jules Favre will have been in our papers before you receive this letter, and you will see that he diplomatically requested permission to leave Paris after scorning to ask the military authorities. We would not give it to him as he wanted to make out that by permitting him to go, we acknowledged the Republic and his Government; to this we would not lend a hand. We could have silently tolerated his presence at the Conference by simply ignoring it. But we could not recognize him by allowing him to represent France before Europe, and therefore did not permit him to leave.

"Our newspapers also publish a lachrymose and meaningless Circular of January 12th, or rather extracts from it, in which Favre pretends that his presence at the Conference would be a recognition of the present Government. He further says that he would plead the cause of France, that his programme remains unaltered (that is 'pas un pouce de notre territoire, pas une pierre de nos forteresses!') which would, indeed, be impossible for us. So he will have to stay in Paris and share its fate with his colleagues."

"Evening, January 23.

"We had General von Kameke, chief military engineer, to supper this evening, and he gave us all sorts of interesting details concerning the bombardment. He is very hopeful as to the effect of our artillery in the north as soon as the first forts at St. Denis are taken. Then Paris will be under a cross fire from the south and from the north. There is increasing evidence that the country is weary of the war, and of Gambetta and his inconsiderate tyranny. He is now in the north with the army at Lille, or rather with the weak remnant of the Army of the

North,<sup>1</sup> and it is stated from fairly authentic sources that the remnant of that army is utterly broken up and discouraged, and that there is violent agitation against Gambetta. There is news also from Paris that there is great depression owing to Trochu's unsuccessful sortie, and there is a movement on foot against him because he only made a sortie instead of marching on Versailles!

"What can he and his colleagues be thinking of? Perhaps the Minister may know or have some notion of it by this time, for who is with him now in his room next to mine?—Jules Favre!

"He sent a letter this morning to ask for an interview with the Minister at Versailles, and I had to close my letter in a hurry as I had to go and get the King's sanction, and then to General Blumenthal at the Crown Prince's headquarters, to arrange for Favre's safe conduct, so that he might not be struck by a Prussian bomb, which would be a very honourable end for him, but very unpleasant for us.

"He arrived about eight this evening, accompanied by his secretary and his son-in-law, Martinez del Rio. The latter is downstairs in the salon with Count Hatzfeldt and Holstein having some refreshments, while Favre is dining with the Minister *tête à tête*, and having a conference."

*"Tuesday Morning, January 24, 1871.  
Frederick the Great's birthday.*

"Just as I was about to get up the Minister had me called. I certainly thought it was something concerning Favre, but far from it. It was only an ordinary matter to Canitz at Madrid. He had me called again while I was dressing, and again I was not much wiser. He has gone to the King and I have leisure to have a little chat with you, and to have my breakfast. But I must be patient and so must you. This silence of the Minister towards his subordinates concerning his intentions, is a peculiarity of his. He will rule alone, and only give his orders, and will listen to no opinion. It is unpleasant enough for him when in Council with other Ministers or Generals to be obliged to hear other opinions and often weigh them, but in his own house no one ventures on this. Of course, it is sometimes right, and that he does not talk of what he is doing is comprehensible. It is no indication of mistrust or secrecy. He does not keep back anything on purpose, it is his nature. Sometimes it is inconvenient on account of the work, for one is not sufficiently

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<sup>1</sup> It was almost completely destroyed on January 19, by General von Goeben at St. Quentin.

informed to be able to carry out his intentions, and this makes him impatient. Nor does he hear enough. Your remark about people who cannot unbosom themselves, either owing to their position or to their own characters occurs to me. . . .

"He is the right man for the negotiations with Favre, whatever they may be, and I patiently and confidently await the result."

*"Half-past one.*

"I can only tell you this much about Favre. He really came out to negotiate about the surrender of Paris. How hard it must have been for him! I don't yet know what he proposed, nor what conditions will be imposed. The Minister was alone about eleven o'clock last evening, and this morning he has been holding a Council of War with his Majesty since ten. He is now in the room next to me conferring with Favre, who has to return to Paris between three and four o'clock. A no less hard road, perhaps for him. In any case it is a great day, even if Favre should go, as Thiers did, with conditions which will not be accepted. Though these negotiations may come to nothing now because of the rebellious elements which may arise in Paris, and which no one can foresee, still it is an immense step towards a real *commencement de la fin*! We are all expecting further developments.

"The coming days may bring something decisive, while we had prepared ourselves to wait weeks ago.

*"Thursday Evening, January 26, 1871.*

"I am able to tell you that the Conference took place in London yesterday without either Jules Favre or any other French Plenipotentiary, and that prospects are good, a very gratifying fact under present circumstances. The Russian Black Sea question was a threatening black cloud on the political horizon, and its apparently fortunate solution is chiefly due to Count Bismarck, who tackled it with vigour and at the right end. The question as to admitting a French Plenipotentiary came up again, and at this second complication, he acted skilfully; the infatuation of the French, and of Favre himself, further his ends no little. The French wished to send no one but Favre, and he wished to go under impossible conditions. You will have read our written refusal to permit Favre to leave Paris. It was a bitter pill to him, the reproof as to his duty in sharing the responsibility in Paris. That he should have decided to come out to confer with the man who administered the pill, is certainly noble, and proves

his sincerity, and his power of rising above personal vanity and irritation. This may be useful to him as a man, and his lachrymose and high-sounding words be set down to the French.

“The French as such really seem incapable of comprehending affairs in their true meaning and gravity.

“*January 27, 1871.*

“We are expecting Favre, who went back to Paris yesterday afternoon in company with a general and some soldiers. General Moltke is now with Count Bismarck at an unusually early hour. So you see that the negotiations are in full swing.

“Favre said that our first ball entered the Pantheon (the old church of S. Geneviève, which has been turned from a temple into a Pantheon for their great men), and tore off the head of Henry IV.'s Statue. May they see in that an omen.”

“*Afternoon.*

“I received your letter just as I finished lunch, an extraordinary lunch with Jules Favre and the general who came with him, and some of the latter's suite. They were frozen and hungry after their drive, and the Minister at once asked them to lunch. Favre was very silent, and looked grave and anxious. I impart these details so that you may derive some hope and comfort from the fact of the negotiations still going on. Although no private telegrams are allowed to be sent from here, you will learn from the newspapers that the negotiations continue. It cannot be concealed that Jules Favre came on Monday and returned to Paris on Tuesday, and that he was here again on Wednesday, returning to Paris next day, and that he is here to-day accompanied by a general and other persons.”

“*Saturday Morning, January 28, 1871.*

“The gentlemen from Paris, Jules Favre and a general have just driven into our courtyard. They went back to Paris yesterday evening, and the fact of their being here again is a good sign. I really think things must be settled now, and will be decided before this letter arrives.

“You must have received my letter about Jules Favre's first coming here, either yesterday or to-day, and you will have seen that the news in *The Times* which you thought incredible at first, is not altogether groundless. After a telegram from Bordeaux this news in *The Times* will be considered impossible, because the gentlemen do not wish to believe that Paris has got to such a pass.

“The Minister is not back from the King, and the gentlemen



are getting warm in the salon. . . . The day has been one of suspense, unsuited for a quiet chat, for one's mind is too full of the questions under discussion, and affect one too closely. . . .

"About Trochu's sortie of the 19th. His failure probably led the Government to begin negotiations; their determination must have been sudden. Jules Favre was riding the high horse on the 13th, and wished to attend the Conference in London, to show the world that the Republic had European recognition. Then follows the failure of the sortie on the 19th, with its losses and disappointment. Count Bismarck sent a sharp refusal to Paris on the 20th, and the same evening Trochu sent by flag of truce to ask for an armistice of forty-eight hours to bury the dead and attend to the wounded. We guessed at once that there was something behind this, for they asked for far too much time, so we refused, and suggested that the outposts should attend to the wounded and dead. Trochu had to resign the command to General Vinoy<sup>1</sup> on the 21st, or 22nd. We learnt this from Favre. Instead of either a lachrymose, haughty or bitter reply to the Minister, as we expected, a short one came from Favre requesting an interview at Versailles. We thought at first it was about their coming out, but it proved to be about the negotiations. Things had so far advanced on the evening of the 26th that an armistice was settled and the bombardment stopped from midnight until the 27th. . . . The rest must be soon arranged. From these dates it seems that the negotiations were decided on after the refusal to permit Favre to attend the London Conference, and after the unfortunate sortie of the 19th and the subsequent refusal of an armistice. Clearly they required time for rest and reflection.

"Our victory at St. Quentin and the breaking up of Faidherbes' army contributed to this, for it was known in Paris. The want and the suffering from the bombardment must be unendurable. There are so many causes at work to influence men, it is hard to say when the decisive moment arrives."

*"Saturday Evening, January 28.*

"The decision came to-day. Paris has capitulated! All the fortresses will be surrendered, the army remains in the city, prisoners of war, and a general armistice for twenty-one days is declared. Count Bismarck and Jules Favre signed the Convention this evening. The gentlemen dined with us late, returning to Paris at nine o'clock. Jules Favre said to the Minister

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<sup>1</sup> Commander-in-Chief of the Army in Paris from January 22nd to March 18th, 1871.

on taking leave : ' Je vous remercie, M. Le Comte, de tous les égards que vous y avez mis, mais—' and with that he made a sign of cutting his own throat. And it is true. The Minister has conducted the negociations in a manner worthy of the victor, but it may cost Favre his life to have concluded the Convention, and the Government with it, when they carry it all out. The excitement about the negociations is very great."

*" Monday Morning, January 30, 1871.*

" You will have read the telegrams about the surrender of the forts, which took place without incident. That is a tremendous step. We have Paris in our power, the army has submitted. What they are doing in Paris, and what the country says, is a matter of indifference. One can hardly fancy that those forts, that Mont Valérien, which vomited forth volcanic fires only a week ago, are now in our hands, and that we shall not hear them any more unless, if necessary, we turn them on Paris. They must have become disheartened there. The Government has dared to publish the whole capitulation, while we kept it secret, partly to protect the signatories. It is a good sign."

*" Evening, January 30, 1871.*

" I was coming up to you, having only a few sheets of paper to read through, when the Minister called me. He had just received a note from the King, with a question difficult to answer in writing, so I had to drive to the King and have him called from tea, and make a verbal reply. He thanked me for coming, with his accustomed kindness. I strolled back with Count Hatzfeldt, who was in the neighbourhood of the Post Director's house. The Minister himself had had a hard day. Favre had been with him, and the post office and railway officials also, with whom he conferred all the afternoon, for there was an endless amount of detail to settle in connection with the Convention, partly because of the inaptitude of the men, and partly because he thinks things should be corrected by himself. I have not much to suffer from this, but Count Hatzfeldt has all the more of it, as, for example, he had to be present and act as interpreter between a German and a French post office official, neither of whom understood the other's language. Towards six o'clock the gentlemen dined with us. This time it was quite an interesting dinner, Bismarck doing the chief part of the talk. Favre said little, however : Bismarck first told a story about a bear-hunt in Russia ; then he tried to make the gentlemen understand our military system, but they evinced little inclination, and finally he came to political principles, and justly said that as a

man is liable to error this should not be driven too far, until it becomes political egoism in himself and others not to admit that he has erred rather than allow his country to go to ruin. He himself was different from what he was twenty-five years ago, when he began political life, as an inexperienced man. One ought not to try to persuade oneself and others with the sophistry that one is still the same; one is obliged to serve one's country as circumstances demand, and set aside political opinions and so-called political principles. Favre, like a true doctrinaire, remarked that it was a fine thing for one to remain faithful to opinions and principles through life, but agreed that they required application on certain occasions. And when Bismarck remarked: 'La patrie veut être servie, pas dominée,' Favre cried with evident feeling: 'C'est très juste, M. le Comte, c'est profond, ce mot-là,' while his companion, Director-General of the Post Office (a French Stephan),<sup>1</sup> agreed at once: 'Oui, c'est très profond.' It was well expressed and a remarkable conversation, and strikingly applicable to Jules Favre himself, at this time. We sat, partly on coals of fire, partly listening with the most eager suspense. Favre only spoke occasionally as to the right of individual conviction, and in defence of political conscience, and in moderate and becoming terms. He is no ordinary man, and has shown that he knows how to conquer self by coming here after Bismarck's cutting letters, and one of the first things he said was: 'Vous avez raison, M. le Comte, je ne puis pas quitter Paris pour la conférence dans ce moment.' The gentlemen have indeed been convinced that they have capitulated a week too late, and that Paris will be starved in the coming weeks if we do not help them. People there evidently think so themselves, and for this reason, the surrender is taking place quietly. I had hardly thought it possible that the forts would be occupied without any disturbances yesterday. The King went to one of our most important batteries to-day, and said to the gunners: 'You have had hard work here, but the flag is up there,' pointing to the German flag on Mont Valérien. 'You have done this.' The enthusiasm was indescribable.

"The poor Minister had another conference of several hours after dinner, then the gentlemen took leave, but return to-morrow. . . ."

*"Tuesday Morning, January 31, 1871.*

". . . There are hordes of thieves in the neutral zone around Paris, and the Paris police must be responsible for their

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<sup>1</sup> Stephan was Postmaster-General for many years.

dispersion. They have completely looted a lady's house near the walls. . . .

"The King drove to Mont Valérien to have a look at the old fort with our flag waving aloft. He was beside himself at the filth in which the French have lived there.

"The Frenchmen were here again to-day, a daily occurrence of late. The Minister ought to resign some of the work, and he could do so, but he will not hand over the details of the armistice to the military authorities. It is his nature to be unable to permit others to do their own part of the work, and it is also because of the frightful ignorance of these men (the French) who have no practical knowledge of government, though they thought they could govern France. . . . We ought to leave them to rule France and in three months they would ruin the country, and create such a state of confusion that there would be a general rising against them. The Minister for Trade and Agriculture sat next to me. He was, of course, appointed on September 4th, but has had nothing whatever to do with either trade or agriculture, unless some vegetables grown under glass during the siege can be counted as experience in agricultural affairs."

*"February 1, 1871.*

"I can heartily echo your prayer that God may preserve Bismarck and the other men necessary to us, and when peace comes, may He grant us those whom we need but do not yet see.

"That Bismarck pursues his aim regardless of obstacles and listens only to his own will, is, indeed, his power; it enables him to rectify, in the most wonderful way, the mistakes which after all the cleverest cannot help committing. They even become stepping-stones and means of success to him. It is a great thing when one is bold enough to be indifferent to one's own errors. Regrets do not exist for him I really believe.

"News has just come that Bourbaki's army has entered Switzerland, 80,000 strong, much better than if they had surrendered to us, for we should have had to feed them. This is the fourth French army that has been done for."



## CHAPTER X

### WAR AND PEACE—ENTRY INTO PARIS—RETURN TO BERLIN

1871

“Das Regiment auf Erden stehet in Gottes Händen, Derselbige giebt ihr zu Zeiten einen tüchtigen Regenten. Es stehet in Gottes Händen, dass es einem Regenten gerathe; derselbige giebt ihm einen löblichen Kanzler.”

JESUS SIRACH, x. 4, 5.

“Sei, Kaiser Wilhelm hier  
Lang Deines Volkes Zier,  
Der Menschheit stolz !”

*To his Wife.*

“*Evening, February 1, 1871.*”

“It is rather more quiet this evening, for Messieurs les Français have gone, they left before evening. We all breathed freely again when we sat down to dinner *en famille*. The Minister was evidently glad, and was in a very cheerful mood. But before dinner was over, one of the French officers, thinking to find Favre here, called and had some talk with the Minister.”

“*Morning, 2nd.*”

“I can imagine the Berliners are not altogether satisfied with the capitulation, and would have preferred that Paris had surrendered at discretion. But she did that when the forts, which command the city, were surrendered. It is frightful for them to have been obliged to agree to the disarmament of the army in Paris, and held as prisoners of war, and at first they were disposed to regard this as a concession. They would have begged us on their knees to send them to Germany to get rid of them. The Bordeaux Government is making use of the armistice to prepare again for war—and they can and will do this, in words, but I am not afraid of its being carried out. They talk of reorganizing three armies. Of these three, one is now in Switzerland, the army of the north has no country behind it and cannot be re-organized, and the third, in the west, is the only one which is partly in existence.”

"February 4, 1871.

"The armistice gives us more work than the war, and so will the peace until it is fully settled. The French are really insupportable. Jules Favre did not come yesterday, but half-a-dozen letters arrived from him and other people instead; for instance, one from the Prefect of Police with complaints which are not altogether unreasonable, but the difficulties cannot be overcome at once. They complain that provisions have not been sent in fast enough, and that our officers and men do not facilitate the conveyance, although people in Paris are literally starving. Then they complain that many Germans, especially officers in mufti, are entering Paris and cause them embarrassment, for if there were a riot, and they were recognized, they could not protect them with the best will in the world to do it. The King said he had given the strictest orders about this, but it is difficult to prove the disobedience or to prevent it. He does not understand how the lieutenants get plain clothes. Count von Maltzahn was in Paris the day before yesterday, not from curiosity, but to confer with the Parisian Sydow, Monsieur de Flavigny, President of the International War Committee, about the sick and wounded.

"The news that Gambetta has resigned is not true. On the contrary, he keeps sending forth violent proclamations from Bordeaux, that the armistice may only be a preparation for war—*guerre à outrance*—not for peace! An Assembly should be elected which desires war, not peace. If this be contrary to the spirit of the Convention which demands that an Assembly should decide the question whether war or peace (of course the war-party can do its utmost to get its representatives in the Assembly, but the Government itself must be neutral, and it would be wrong on the part of a member of the Government), it is a decided breaking up of the Convention, should the decree of Gambetta and the Bordeaux Government forbid the election to the Assembly of all the political men of the Empire, all who did service under it as Ministers, Senators, Prefects, and all who have ever been government candidates. All this is not in agreement with the Convention. *Librement*. . . . We protested against this at once, and declared we would not recognize members chosen under this law. I believe the Government in Paris will abrogate the decree, or else there will be a rupture which the French would bitterly regret later."

"Evening.

"The house is quiet this evening. Not much doing, and the Minister stayed some time after dinner with his eldest son, Herbert,

who arrived with a horse-transport. He has now attained his desire of being exchanged into a marching regiment. The second son is orderly officer to General von Manteuffel, and has been in the interesting manœuvres which drove the whole French army across the Swiss border. All military authorities consider this one of the most brilliant episodes of the campaign, and it is owing to Moltke's genius to have planned it, and to the General Staff to have executed it. It could not, of course, have been done without Werder, who opposed them with much skill and heroism, though they were four times his strength. Werder has won his sword of honour most brilliantly, and General von Manteuffel carried out the work with equal brilliancy. The only drawback to it all is, that Manteuffel has taken 15,000 prisoners, although some 80,000 crossed the frontier into Switzerland. We don't know where to send the prisoners. In other campaigns one was delighted to take prisoners, but now they are a worry to the authorities. The King exclaimed at tea yesterday, when Manteuffel's telegram arrived and was read out: 'The poor Minister of War!' He has to arrange for their care, and he declared lately, that if another whole army were taken, he would resign."

*"Monday, February 13, 1871.*

"I thought I should have a quiet evening, but the Minister sent me to the King and to the Crown Prince at half-past nine. Both visits were about the reception of Cardinal Bonnechose<sup>1</sup> to-morrow, about whom both wished to know something. I was glad to be sent to his Majesty, who admitted me, and I found him much better than he was yesterday. I ventured to tell him that it was a comfort to me, and he thanked me again for having come so late. The Crown Prince said he would not detain me as he would have been glad to do, because he had a slight cold and was going to bed at once. He was very cheerful, and it struck me afresh as the lamp light fell upon him, what a handsome man he is."

*"February 19, 1871.*

" . . . . When out riding we had quite a fresh view of Paris. We saw it in the most brilliant sunshine, beyond the valley, and more distinctly than we have ever done before; the golden dome of the Invalides, and the fine but less beautiful one of the Pantheon, and the grey old towers and great mass of Notre Dame. We rode towards Sèvres, where the factory is half destroyed. It was very gay and Sunday-like there, innumerable soldiers, well-dressed ladies, and many civilians. We rode

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<sup>1</sup> Archbishop of Rouen.

through the crowd towards the bridge, which has been blown up. During the siege all communication with officers bearing flags of truce from Paris took place there. They had to be brought across by boat. The river was, however, often covered with ice. It is quite an historic spot. Favre as well as others crossed there. The bear is still standing at the end of the bridge on this side. The soldiers put it there as a defiant outpost. You may have seen accounts of it in the papers. I saw it for the first time, for during hostilities no one dared to go so far, for the bombs fell like flakes of snow. We rode along the Seine, a wonderful road, the river on our right, and the park of St. Cloud on our left. Hatzfeldt pointed out several places where he had walked with the Empress. Crowds were promenading as far as the ruins of the palace. We returned along the chaussée."

*"Monday, February 21.*

"Thiers<sup>1</sup> sent to say he was coming at one o'clock to-day. As far as it is possible from a first interview, one can see how the hare is running, and run he must, if anything is to be settled, for the armistice ends on Friday, and if there are no definite prospects of peace, then the French will be in for something. We are prepared, and stronger than ever, indeed, quite as strong as before the war, and we will not shrink from putting on the thumbscrews. But God keep us from more warfare. The rage and bitterness in our army would create a frightful state of things. The French themselves seem to feel that it could not go on. All the news from Bordeaux and elsewhere tends towards peace, so if Thiers has the moral courage to withstand the brawlers, he must settle matters. It is not easy to make the negotiations public, but if the armistice is prolonged, on Friday,<sup>2</sup> you may regard it as a sign of peace, for without such a prospect it will not be extended."

#### DIARY

February 22. "Thiers here alone for the second time. He had an audience of his Majesty at one, and one with the Crown Prince immediately afterwards. It is reported of his audience of his Majesty, that his great wish is that we should not enter Paris. There would be no danger for the King, he hoped the King would not think of such a thing, but it might be unpleasant for the troops, and he could not answer for the excitement of the people, nor for the Press. His Majesty said: 'He could not

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<sup>1</sup> Thiers had been appointed, at Bordeaux, Chef du pouvoir exécutif on February 18.

<sup>2</sup> It was extended from February 24, to March 3.



give him an answer on that point, nor promise anything ; that it would be hard on the troops not to enter Paris, and hard, after France had hindered them from entering Vienna, to shut them out of their own capital. The King alluded to Louis Napoleon's statement that it was the Press and public opinion that had forced him to go to war against his own wishes, but Thiers did not agree with it. Neither the Press, nor the country, nor public opinion, nor the Corps Législatif had desired war, but the Court with the Empress at its head, and they had overcome the Corps Législatif. Reverting to the question of peace, Thiers did not enter into details, he could only beg the King's *magnanimité*. He asked no questions, and did not express any special wish. He spoke so low that the King had difficulty in understanding him. He says that he had seen the King at Baden as well as Paris, but the King does not remember."

" *Wednesday, February 22, 1871.*

"The armistice has been extended two days longer, until Sunday evening, nothing is settled, but it is not a bad sign. The Minister is just now having an interview with Thiers."

" *February 23.*

"Thiers is not coming to-day, I hear, as he wishes to confer with his friends concerning the interviews of yesterday and the day before. The poor man is quite down-hearted. The Minister said he could scarcely speak from suppressed excitement, and that the more moved he became, his speech became lower and more indistinct."

" *Morning, February 24.<sup>1</sup>*

"Thiers is certainly the best man the French could have chosen as Chief of the State and negociator of peace, indeed, he is the only one. In fact, he is the only distinguished man in France at present. He retains the traditions of the old school, in which certain forms and even prudence and moderation reign, which seem to exist no longer. He is, too, a thousand times more honest than the others. The great men of France have

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<sup>1</sup> Diary, February 24. "Bismarck sent me to His Majesty at a quarter to three this afternoon, to inform him that he had settled upon the chief things with Thiers: Alsace with Metz but without Belfort; five milliards. If His Majesty sanctions this, it could be signed on Saturday. The King will agree if Moltke does not think too much of Belfort. The King called after me from the window to find out whether the battle-fields of the 16th and 18th were included, and for me to return in the evening with the information whether Vionville and St. Marie aux Chênes as well as St. Privat were included. I went to the King again at half-past seven with the usual report, he talked a good deal about the conditions of peace, and was very cheerful and gracious."

vanished, and are dead and forgotten, and no great men have arisen in the new generation, for Gambetta is not great. Thiers thinks the Orleans family are really impossible now, as well as every other dynasty, legitimate or illegitimate. None of them are able to take upon themselves the present disasters either on their own account or that of their race. The Republic is, however, a change, is ephemeral, it can take up the misery, the disgrace (as the French foolishly regard it—the real disgrace lies in other directions than in the surrender of territory) because it does not hand it over to successors. That is the advantage of the Republic, not merely at the present moment, so that they can begin afresh, and are bound by no traditions, and there is no decaying dynasty on the throne. But thrice blest is a country whose renewed strength is bound up with the dynasty of its ruler, rather than in the advantages of a Republic. Thiers is too clever to think that the Republic and his own power can last, but he may well count upon a few years, and deem himself the only man possible for the time. The exhaustion of the people, which will be seen when peace is settled, will perhaps cause them to retain him. He has been very clever in surrounding himself by his Conseil des ministres as well as with many of the men of the Gouvernement de la défense nationale. They must suffer with him for what they have destroyed. Hereafter he will seek other men than Jules Favre. That he did not come to an understanding as to an armistice in November is less his fault than that of the Government. The quiet which has been preserved in Paris, contrary to all expectation, shows how entire and great is the exhaustion there."

*"Saturday Morning, the 25th.*

"It is strange to be so near a decision, for it must come off to-day. The decision from Bordeaux is yet to come, but that means waiting only a few days longer. God grant that 'Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other,' as I read to-day.

"The King was very kind and gracious again yesterday evening. This close and frequent intercourse with him at such a time as this will always be a beautiful memory to me when I am once more living my quiet Berlin life. 'If your name is ever mentioned before your Kaiser's throne, or to your beloved one, it will be your dearest reward!' Especially at such a time as this!

"I chanced to be introduced to M. Thiers yesterday, but had no conversation with him. When the two men entered, Thiers and Jules Favre, I was at once struck with the contrast between them. One is so refined, little, fragile, polished and well-groomed,

and the other bearded, almost bristling, and robust. It was the old and the new, the royal and the republican France. I wish with all my heart that a new and better France will, indeed, arise from the fiery furnace. The King said yesterday : ' Will not the lesson be lost upon France, as, thank God, it has not been lost upon us ? '

" It was through your Papa that I first became known to the King in 1847. Your father and I dined at Sanssouci with Friedrich Wilhelm IV. and it was through your father's kindness I was not dismissed immediately after dinner, but was made to stay for a trip on the water and to tea afterwards. The Prince of Prussia graciously spoke to me when we were on the water, and I believe it was your father who presented me to him. Little could I then imagine that I was in the presence of the future Kaiser of Germany, nor that I should ever be thus known to him ; and just as little could I fancy that I should ever be so nearly connected with the Director-General von Olfers, and with my whole heart call him father."

*" Saturday Evening.*

" I have just returned from making my report to the King and to General Moltke on the day's work. I can only tell you that the decision must be definitely made to-morrow, twenty-four hours hence.

" The Minister was only able to send me to the King towards ten this evening. It has been a trying day for him, for, just fancy, he was engaged with M. Thiers and M. Jules Favre from one o'clock till nine, having only a short interval for food at six ! Neither of them are men of business, but are rhetorical, one a chatterer, and the other is silent and only hears what he himself says. It must have been frightful work. I scarcely ever saw the Minister, even at the worst of times, as he was after the interview was over. I pitied him deeply, and after I had drawn a picture of him to the King, he bade me give him his hearty sympathy. Dead tired though he is, he cannot sleep. The negotiations yesterday turned less upon details, and only lasted until dinner and for a little while after it, but he never got to sleep until after half-past three, for he was engaged superintending work. To-day will be no better, and to-morrow, Thiers and Favre are coming again at eleven o'clock. The Minister must comfort himself by thinking that he is a thousand times better off than those poor men with whom he would not change places for anything. There are worse things than being bothered by Thiers and Favre.

" I could wish he had such nerves as Moltke, whom I have just fetched from his bed, and who was as brisk, collected and

calm as if he had had his night's sleep. The King was very cheerful and said he felt quite well again and had enjoyed a long walk in the fine weather, and was surprised not to find me awaiting him on his return.

"The Minister left the table unusually early to go back to his Frenchmen. I stayed down a while and then went to my room to prepare a report for the King concerning a temporary meeting room for the German congregation at Jerusalem on the land belonging to the Knights of S. John. I heard Thiers and Favre leaving just as I had finished, and saw them enter their carriage. Then the Minister came into the salon and spoke of various little matters connected with the negotiations, as for example, about Thiers' incredible ignorance of the geography of his own country. He went to his room soon after this and sent me to the King, first giving me the necessary instructions. When I told the latter that Thiers had not known anything about a particular town, nor that it was on the right-hand side of the river and not on the left, the King remarked that he also did not know it. 'Yes,' I replied, 'your Majesty has no occasion to know. Thank God, you are not the French Minister, but our own dear King and Kaiser.'"

*"Sunday, February 26, 1871.*

"Now I shall end this wonderful day with you. Lulu's<sup>1</sup> birthday will rank in the history of the world as a great day. May it be one of joy and thanksgiving, both for her and for the world. That a peace<sup>2</sup> was concluded such as has not been known in Germany for a thousand years, a peace before which that of 1815 is as nothing, may indeed, be a cause of pride to you. And it has been gained by German power only, without any foreign help, and indeed, in spite of the envy, and in opposition to the sympathies of foreign nations which have not dared to meddle with it. It is a peace which gives back to Germany two strong fortresses, and a most beautiful province, a province that will be grateful to us for having kept it with our blood from decay, and from falling into the hands of the devil of foreigners.

"It is indeed a great day, and the King and Crown Prince, and also Bismarck and the rest of us, feel it deeply!

"But all dangerous obstacles are not yet conquered, for the hundred-headed hydra Assembly at Bordeaux has to consent. The plenipotentiaries, however, seem to have no doubts on that point. It is not easy to revoke things which are so far settled, and all the world in France and beyond it, will say that what Thiers

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<sup>1</sup> Countess Luise Yorck von Wartenburg became Frau von Katte of Roskow.

<sup>2</sup> The preliminaries of peace, Versailles, February 26th.



and Favre have conceded, the Assembly at Bordeaux must agree to. Besides they must make peace for they have not got the means for continuing the war.

"The telegrams have been published, and the news of the Olive Branch from the Kaiser to the Queen, you will find in the newspapers to-morrow if not this evening.

"I think the peace will delight you. Metz is secured! I had no end of anxiety about it, and dreaded lest those who wished to relinquish it might prevail. To give up Belfort which is entirely French and of importance to France in a defensive war, but not in a war of attack against Germany, is, to my idea, quite without danger; it is a sort of compensation for Metz. Five milliards of francs or fifteen hundred million thalers, are such a fabulous sum that no one can grasp it.

"The new German Empire is glorious, and has been magnificently ushered in, and the Kaiser brings a fine dowry to Germany.

"The peace was signed shortly after I despatched my last letter. We are busy winding up affairs, so there is scarcely time to send the letters off. The contracting parties were in the Minister's little room upstairs; those on the German side, were Bismarck, Count Bray, the Bavarian Minister,<sup>1</sup> Freiderr von Wächter, the Minister for Würtemberg, and Herr Jolly, for Baden.<sup>2</sup> On the French side, were Thiers and Jules Favre, he who said: '*Pas un pouce de notre territoire, pas une pierre de nos fortresses.*' At last all was written and had to be sent up stairs, again to be read and agreed upon, and the gentlemen did this themselves, without having an official to do it for them. At a quarter to five the Minister sent for me, and said to me in Latin: '*Mandate Regi quod signatum,*' inform the King that it has been signed, and I at once drove off in a carriage. The groom of the chamber said: '*His Majesty has been expecting you.*' Then the aide-de-camp announced me, and I walked in without despatches this time, made the short announcement and congratulated the King. He was greatly moved and shook hands with me repeatedly, saying what a great and glorious achievement it was, what a mighty deed in the history of Germany. Much of course remains to be done, and a great work lies before us, but the foundation is laid, and God will help in the building of it. The King commanded me to give the Minister his warm approval, and say how he regretted not to see and thank him himself to-day for all the loyalty and wisdom with which

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<sup>1</sup> Count Bray. Born 1809. Minister-President in 1879. Concluded the negotiations concerning the entrance of Bavaria into the German Empire.

<sup>2</sup> Julius Jolly, 1825-1891. Minister-President from 1868.

he had carried out, under great mental and bodily exertion, his difficult work. And true it was, for these last days were trying ones for the Minister, and he would scarcely desire to live them over again. That would be too much for any one man. When I returned, I again had to go to the King with the signed document. I read it to him and he examined the signatures with great care.

"I found the party at table on my return, the Frenchmen having left for Paris, wishing to go to Bordeaux this evening. I hear the train at this moment puffing and rolling past. It is probably the one which is taking them to Bordeaux. We sat at table for a long time, the Minister in high good humour. He had been obliged to be excused from dining with his Majesty who was giving a dinner-party to the King of Würtemberg. I went to the Crown Prince for the Minister after dinner, to announce the news and to hand him the document, though he had, of course, heard everything from his father."

*"Monday Morning, February 27, 1871."*

"On my return from the Crown Prince last evening, I found the Minister and his staff sitting by the fire listening to Keudell's music. I could not leave at once, it was out of the question on such a day. I will tell you something about the genesis of the negotiations. Friday the 24th, was the decisive day. I went to the King at three o'clock to obtain his consent to the conditions upon which Bismarck, Thiers and Favre had agreed. If his Majesty gave his consent, the peace could be signed the next day. It concerned the five milliards, and the surrendered territory, but without the fortress of Belfort. The French would rather have given up Belfort and kept Metz; as we would not agree to this, they had to keep Belfort. They could not open both gates of France. The King was out driving so I did not find him. I went again at four and waited a while until he came in, when he sent for me immediately and I gave him the message. The King was surprised, but at once saw that Belfort had no strategical value for us, and that it is altogether French, and that war must not recommence on its account, so he consented provided Moltke had no objection. Meanwhile General Moltke had been with Bismarck and did not object to the arrangements. I went to the King again in the evening to take him this assurance.

"The King was greatly moved, shook hands several times and was very kind, thanking me and all who took an active part in the matter, and when I went again in the evening with

the usual report on current affairs, he talked over the whole thing, discussed every detail, and was delighted and much moved.

“Thiers and Favre came again at one o'clock on Saturday. They agreed to the chief things, but poor Count Bismarck had to endure some more trying hours occasioned by Thiers' grumbling and his unpractical conduct. He made a long speech, would not let the others get through with what they had to say, said nothing to the point himself, and did not seem to understand things. When he conceded great points, he worried over small ones, until Bismarck declared he would not talk French any more, as it was no more necessary for him to understand it than for Thiers to understand German, and he would send for an interpreter if Thiers wished for one. Upon this he began to speak German, which so startled Thiers that he calmed down and took a more practical view of things. But the signing did not take place that day. They were agreed as to boundaries, and also about the war indemnity, but Thiers wished to consult his colleagues about the manner of paying it, and our gradual withdrawal from French territory. So I was only able to go to the King at half-past nine and report progress. He was much surprised, for he had been expecting me all day, and had expected to find me on his return from his drive. I had to go to General Moltke after my return from the King, and I had to knock him up from his bed to beg him not to allow any over zealous part of the troops to begin to fire on Sunday evening. The French gentlemen came again yesterday morning, and the signing was done at four o'clock as I wrote.

“Now since the question of peace seems to be happily settled, comes the question of our return home. It is decided that the King will be in Berlin for his birthday, and the opening of the Reichstag will be deferred until then.”

*“Monday Evening, February 27, 1871.”*

“Thiers only left Paris for Bordeaux this evening, where the acceptance of the peace will probably be hastened so that our troops may be released from Paris. It is a sign of their resignation that their flags have been wreathed with immortelles to-day, and immortelles worn in the button-holes in Paris and then solemnly burnt. They can best comfort themselves with such sentimental spectacles. Our troops will enter the day after to-morrow, but will occupy only one single part, and remain but a few days, which is most wise, lest something might occur in that Babel. I know nothing about the King's plans as to Paris. They are

probably not finally settled, and it remains to be seen how the troops get on first."

*"Tuesday Morning, February 28, 1871.*

"It is a windy, cloudy, gloomy morning, and it does not seem as if it would clear up, and it is not a pleasant prospect for the dinner at St. Germain which Count Bismarck is giving for the Bavarian, Würtemberg and Baden Ministers.

"I have got to know the immediate neighbourhood of Versailles pretty well. I have not had time for more distant excursions, but I have lived through most vital times here, and I prize this work more than all the pleasures of the tourist.

"It was lucky for me that Bismarck could not go to the King at the decisive moment, and when I took him the news of the final settlement of the negotiations, after having been back with his consent, it was the most eventful moment of my life, such as comes to few men.

"The Crown Prince spoke admirably when I went to him on Sunday. At his age the future holds a greater place than it does with the King. He perfectly appreciated what enormous responsibilities lay before him, but God would give him the men he needed, and he trusted to be able to complete the great work, for in his wife, he said, I knew he also had a help, a support and a blessing.

"The King is not going to Baden. He told me that his home had the first claim on him, and if he travelled through South Germany now, it would seem as if he were doing it in order to call forth demonstrations, which would not be at all pleasant for him, besides he wished to be in Berlin for his birthday, and to open the Reichstag in person."

*"Wednesday Morning, March 1, 1871.*

"To my great delight I find every one satisfied with the preliminaries for peace. More was not expected, and it is surprising that so much has been obtained. It is something enormous, beyond anything the German people have experienced, nor has anything like it been known in the history of the world. The surrendered territory is not large compared with the rest of France or Germany, but the moral significance, the winning back of the lost, and the way it has been won, sets a seal upon the character of the work. I am glad this is generally recognized. We shall know to-day how it has been taken at Bordeaux. Many think the Assembly will have decided yesterday. I don't



think so, for the need of speechification with the French is too great."

*"Wednesday Evening.*

"A beautiful evening after this wonderful day. I actually entered Paris with the troops, not with the Kaiser. I only went a short distance, it is true, only as far as the great triumphal arch, the Arc de l'Étoile. His Majesty the Kaiser and King, gave orders for certain troops to enter Paris to-day: parts of the XIth. and the VIth. and of the Bavarian Army Corps, after the parade at Longchamps. The great reviews for him and for the Tsar took place there in 1867. It was certain the Kaiser would not go with the troops, and I hesitated last evening about going, but suddenly decided this morning to go.

"I rode to St. Cloud, thence turned to the left, having the Seine on my right till I passed Suresnes. You will find a bridge marked on the map, a chain bridge which was destroyed, but portions still dangle over the river. I crossed by a new bridge near it. You will find Longchamps on the other side. It is a part of the Bois de Boulogne; the great races, reviews and the spring promenades used to take place there. It is a large, fine, grassy plain bordered by thickets, and shallow basins of water; a cheerful recreation ground for thousands of people. But grim Mont St. Valérien dominates the whole plain, and if need be could hurl death and destruction among the throng, and so it gives a character to the entire neighbourhood.

"The King and his distinguished company, including the Minister, drove there and then mounted their horses. Some 30,000 troops were drawn up in three incalculably long lines down which the King rode followed by his brilliant escort of more than three hundred, sometimes at a flying gallop, and again at a walk, down one side and up the other, while the troops hurrahed and the bands played. . . . The 30,000 men with the Crown Prince at their head marched past the King and the rest of us to the music of the bands.

"We had to separate afterwards. I saw the King drive off towards Versailles, and would have looked for the Minister but heard he had ridden off towards Paris. Had I returned to Versailles I should have deserted him, so I joined some of the adjutants, Radziwill, Alten and others, who wished to ride a little way in the direction of Paris. We went through the beautiful Bois de Boulogne. . . . We met the staff of the XIth Army Corps, and they wanted to ride through the Porte de Muette, but it was closed, so we rode to the next gate. There was no danger; it is not a gay quarter and few people were about,

and those few were mostly women and children, and wounded men in blouses and uniform, with arms bandaged. It was very quiet. There were cries and whistling and rather a crowd at the Arc de l'Étoile, and Radziwill, in his good French spoke pleasantly now and then to the people. 'Sont-ils polis, ces gens !' cried a woman.

*" Thursday, March 2, 1871.*

" Jules Favre telegraphed last night that the Bordeaux accepted the peace, five hundred and forty-six against one hundred and six.

" Fancy, since I began this sheet, I have been to the King twice, and Jules Favre is expected at this moment to bring the official acceptance from the Bordeaux Assembly. They have been quicker than M. Thiers would have had us believe. He declared that though there was no doubt but that they would agree, it would take a week. The fox knew perfectly well that they would agree but only said it would require time, so that we should not hasten the entry of our troops into Paris. That began yesterday instead of on Monday. The soldiers will stay forty-eight hours, and were to have been replaced by others to-morrow, Friday. That, however, is not possible now if the Ratifications have been exchanged, as is probably the case."

*" Evening.*

" This was another eventful day. Favre telegraphed last night that the Assembly had accepted the Preliminaries of Peace, and said he thought our troops should leave at once. A telegram was despatched early this morning saying we must first see the Ratification, but he arrived to see the Minister at half-past seven before he could have received the telegram. He was told that the Minister could not be wakened and did not get up before ten or eleven, and that the other signatories were not yet here, and I naturally did not wish to anticipate the Minister. He decided to return to Paris about something he had to do, and to come back at half-past twelve, when to our surprise, he brought the weighty document with him in due form. Old Thiers had been sly and had diplomatically observed forms. They had hurried the business tremendously, because our stay in Paris depended on this. The Ratifications were exchanged between three and four o'clock, so that it is only now that peace can be said to be ratified. Thiers has outwitted Count Bismarck with his eight or ten days. It is not pleasant to the King, who would have liked to have had more troops enter Paris, and it is certainly Bismarck's fault, but he always has his own way, settles everything himself, never discusses things, consults no one, and yet it is

impossible for him to think of everything unaided. However, all this is of no consequence compared with all the great things he has accomplished.

"There is now a general leave-taking. A crowd of people were here to-day, and we parted with some of our papers and sent them on to Berlin in huge cases.

"The King had another review at Longchamps to-day, the Garde de Corps and other troops, but I did not go to Paris again."

*"Saturday Morning, March 4, 1871.*

"Our occupation of Paris passed off quietly, as you know from the telegrams. Some stones were thrown at the last troops, but the crowd quickly dispersed when the hussars turned. Now they are left to themselves, they seem to come to blows, and the small power under arms is unequal to coping with the *graves désordres*. They ask us to let French troops pass through to Paris, which we may consent to, although they have no right to expect it after a recent deed of robbery committed by franc-tireurs in the department of Rheims since the Peace.

*"Evening.*

"The Minister is sure to leave before the King, who will make a roundabout journey to see the troops, so I did not think it would be necessary for me to accompany him, but this evening the Minister unexpectedly declared that the King would keep me with him. In any case he will be in Berlin several days before his birthday, indeed, he may shorten his journey; for various reasons the evacuation of the troops will be very rapid, and he would not be able to inspect them properly. He may be in Berlin soon, but things are still uncertain, and plans alter every moment. It was settled yesterday that the King would go to Compiègne direct from here, and we with him, but it is very rightly changed to-day. Now Ferrières, our old Ferrières, has been fixed upon this morning. It was said the departure would be on Monday, and the Würtemberg and Saxon troops will be inspected on the way, and now, this evening, our departure is deferred until Tuesday, both inspection and journey."

*"Sunday Morning, March 5, 1871.*

"Your comparison between Bismarck and Moltke is quite right. The task of the latter is clear and simple, it belongs to a simpler character to perform it; in contrast to the complicated paths of politics which must ever be looking to side issues. Added to this, God has placed a complicated character, such as Count Bismarck, for this work, just as he has put Moltke in his place

also. I should not call one an easier task than the other, but that of Moltke is pleasanter, notwithstanding the bloodshed. This bloodshed is not the object but the means, and the object is attained with the least possible waste of blood. And to spare it, one sometimes has to shed it. And then the strategy practiced by Moltke is not only an art, or the outcome of the intellectual faculties, reasoning and calculation, but it demands great qualities of character as well, firmness, energy of will, and self-discipline. Besides all this, he has many amiable human qualities in his modesty, simplicity, unselfishness and devotion to the cause."

" *March 6, 1871.*

" The King was rather annoyed that the march of the Guards through Paris on Friday, (he had intended to have marched in also at their head), had been given up. Owing to this vexation, he has most likely neglected to telegraph immediately to the Kaiserin, or has not done so cheerfully, or else he has telegraphed that the affair is uncertain on account of the lack of information concerning the Ratification, and has therefore, been postponed. In short the lack of jubilation in Berlin is the reflex of the mortification here at the hurried evacuation of Paris. I am not so much dissatisfied about it, although I should have been glad of it for the King's sake, and that of the troops, but who knows that it is not a good thing? Something might have happened, and God has willed it otherwise."

" 2 P.M.

" It is really true that I saw the others take their departure for Berlin half-an-hour ago, while I am obliged to stay behind ! . . . I end the campaign with Herr von Blanquart,<sup>1</sup> as I began it with him at Ems."

" *Thursday Morning, March 9, 1871.*

" This glorious morning would have enticed me out of doors, had I not been awaiting General Fabrice, who was formerly Saxon Minister, and afterwards Governor-General of the Western Provinces of France. He is at present Bismarck's representative to the French Government in respect to matters relating to the Preliminaries of Peace. It is a tiresome and responsible post with a tremendous amount of administrative work added, which requires much personal intercourse with the French. Fabrice is well suited for it, for he was, of course, versed in Government work when he was Minister of War. He is very conciliating, calm and considerate and firm, just the qualifications requisite for this sort of negociation,

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<sup>1</sup> St. Blanquart, private secretary. " A quiet, refined, learned man," as Abeken writes, and one with whom he had much work and enjoyed it.



and as a soldier he stands well with our military men with whom he has to do."

"FERRIÈRES, *March 9, 1871. Evening.*

"General Fabrice had a telegram from Count Bismarck despatched at one o'clock from Berlin. . . . Two quiet, but very long days are before us here. The Kaiser only takes a small military escort with him to Rouen and Amiens, so that even the Crown Prince has only one person with him. The rest of us remain here, because the railway train from Loigny to Nancy is either crammed or there are no carriages, and we should only be able to set out from here on Sunday morning."

"*March 10. Morning.*

"I have just heard that his Majesty made rather too long an excursion yesterday, and has sent the Crown Prince to represent him. It was hard for him to give up the journey, and he could not make up his mind to do so even yesterday, wishing to decide this morning. He told me yesterday that it would be a great disappointment to him not to see the Rhenish Army Corps, for he had lived in the Rhine province and the Corps would not be coming to Berlin. I said I fully understood his feeling, but he owed the care of his health to the country. He was sorry that March 21st had been fixed for opening the Reichstag for he felt bound to be present. I could but reply that Princes and people greatly desired his presence and that it was a grand occasion for so many Princes to wish to be in Berlin with their Kaiser, (as the Grand Duke of Baden said to me on our last evening at Versailles), and the Kaiser agreed with me."

"*Sunday Morning, March 12, 1871.*

"The provisional programme is as follows: To leave here at eight o'clock A.M., and go by train from Lagny three-quarters of an hour's journey. It will be odd to travel by railway for the first time in seven months. We arrive at Nancy on Monday the 13th, stay there over Tuesday the 14th, leave Wednesday morning the 15th, for Frankfort via Metz and Saarbrücken. Stay there Wednesday night and leave again on Thursday the 16th. The King is going to Weimar for the night, and will reach Berlin at five P.M. on Friday the 17th. We are not going to Weimar in any case and are awaiting orders whether we are to go to Berlin direct from Frankfort or stay the night at Erfurt, and join the King so as to arrive with him on the 17th."

“FRANKFORT A/M, *March 15, 1871.*

“The King so absolutely counts upon our remaining with him to the end, that none of us have courage to beg for release from here. It would not be possible for me to leave, for I have constantly to make verbal reports about telegrams from Berlin, and this will continue until the last moment. We leave at ten to-morrow morning, reach Erfurt at five P.M., stay there all night, and meet the King at Weimar on Friday; then from Halle we will travel via Magdeburg, and arrive at the Potsdam station at five.”

“*Thursday Morning, March 16, 1871.*

“Yesterday was a noteworthy day. We were on German soil at Metz, but not in a German atmosphere; *that*, we breathed at Saarbrücken, on the old frontier.<sup>1</sup> It was a wonderful sensation to be at home again. We journeyed on the beautiful and interesting road to Kreuznach and Bingen, thence to Frankfort. Here and everywhere a glorious reception, triumphal arches, triumphal entries, ladies, young and old, toasting the Kaiser and drinking his health.”

<sup>1</sup> Of our Fatherland is meant.

## CHAPTER XI

### LAST RAYS OF HAPPINESS—ILLNESS AND DEATH

1871-1872

“Was ich wünsche, wird sich fügen,  
Wenn es anders Gott gefällt.”

“Von den Lebenden lernen wir sterben, und von den Sterbenden lernen wir Leben.”

ABEKEN returned in the Kaiser's suite on March 17th. Berlin gave striking expression to its delight. Abeken's wife remained at home by his desire, and sat a long time at the window watching the gay throng, while the sun shone, and the air was fresh and clear. Her heart was filled with joy when at last a carriage turned the corner, and the dear old life began again in the quiet little home.

The work to be got through was endless after the war, and the promulgation of the dogma of Papal Infallibility which brought about the Kulturkampf, added greatly to Abeken's labours, for the work was placed in his hands.

On June 4th he received a doctor's diploma in recognition of his archæological labours, and brilliant entertainments were given in his honour.

The troops entered Berlin on June 16th, and on July 9th, Abeken followed the Kaiser, as usual, to Ems, taking his wife with him. That charming resort was less gay than it used to be, and the few Frenchwomen to be seen there wore black with red roses.

But there were many others in deep mourning, and Abeken observed: that “Ems has never looked so entirely a health resort and so little like a place for a Court.”

The Kaiser went to Gastein whither also Abeken followed, and on throughout his journeys. The Kaiser was at Regensburg on August 10th, and met the Emperor of Austria at Ischl,

and thence he went to Salzburg on the 12th. Writing to his father-in-law at the end of August Abeken says :—

“ It is better being on duty this year than last, for now it is peace, then it was war duty. On the photograph which the Kaiser presented to me on my birthday he wrote : ‘ For August 19, 1870 and 1871,’ and he told me afterwards that he had associated the two days, the one when I was on the field of battle with him, and the other when I was with him after peace was assured. . . .

“ The meeting between the two Emperors at Ischl was of a very friendly character, as was that between their Ministers.”

At the beginning of September the Emperor of Austria arrived at Salzburg for the purpose of giving a special reception to Kaiser Wilhelm. Of some of his suite Abeken writes :—

“ Beust was also present. His clever countenance is not altogether attractive. . . . Andrassy appeared far more interesting in his Hungarian uniform, the violet mantle enhancing his good looks.”

Abeken was introduced to him, and when Andrassy dropped a glove which fell at Abeken's feet he said : “ Respurice omen.”

He frequently dined with the Kaiser and Kaiserin at Baden, and on one occasion when the latter remarked how few people were there with whom they could enjoy social intercourse, the Kaiser, pointing to Abeken, said : “ There is one,” and the Kaiserin kindly asked him to come again in the evening.

On his return to Berlin, Abeken writes to Frau Richard, who was by birth a Frenchwoman, and to whom the war had brought a double measure of distress :—

“ In the depths of our sorrow at our own sacrifices—for we too have had to make great sacrifices—we can measure yours, which could find no gladness in the successes of the Fatherland. These successes were the more heart-stirring because they were not mere outward successes, but were the setting aside of all internal contention, the moral uplifting of Germany, and the peace and unity of our country. Not the victory over a foreign foe, but the unity of the German race, the moral rise of the country was the great achievement for us. . . . You will recognize the



fine humanity of the King, as I did when I brought him the news that the Preliminaries of Peace were signed by M. Thiers and Bismarck: 'It is a great and glorious thing for us, but a hard one for France, as hard as the Peace of Tilsit was for us in 1807. May this misfortune become the blessing to France, that ours became to us.' It touched me greatly that this should be his first feeling at that solemn moment, and it may well be called great. The venerable old man was and is most human, and is completely free from all boastfulness. Let me close this subject with the wish that this misfortune may be turned into a blessing for your country, and that with the blessing of God, a friendly intercourse may take place with Germany and that we each may emulate the other in a common zeal for the joys of peace."

Christmas Eve was spent with his wife's family. . . . On that day the Kaiser sent Abeken a bronze bust of Bismarck with these lines :—

"I send you this bust of your chief as a Christmas present, in remembrance of the long period during which you have acted as his representative with me, a time I recall with pleasure. —WILHELM. *December 25, 1871.*"

The threads of old acquaintance were now gathered together, which had necessarily been dropped during the war, and Abeken writes to Frau Schäfer as follows :—

"I don't know whether I told you of my correspondence with Lord Redcliffe last year about a beautiful poem of his on our peace with France, and which he permitted me to publish here. He seems to retain his strength at his advanced age, and to have preserved his sympathy for everything that is noble and beautiful, although he may feel in the new England of to-day that he belongs to a past age. England has gone through great internal struggles, but what a fund of healthy life lies at the bottom of the people, recent times have proved. We are in the midst of severe spiritual struggles, but I have confidence in the people and look forward to the future with joy. The religious struggles are more dangerous and strike deeper than the political, but the victory of light will be all the more glorious at last. I trust to that."

The political struggles in the Church assumed a more serious aspect. To a cousin in America Abeken writes :—

*Mrs. Edeler. (Mary Abeken.)*

*"Easter Day, 1872.*

"I have looked with a sort of envy at America these last months, which has not usually been the case with me, for I do not think you better off in your Republic than we are in our Kingdom and Empire. But you have one advantage over us. You have no religious or ecclesiastical difficulties, such as the separation between Church and State to which we must come, I fear, for this is an accomplished fact in America. I say, I fear we must come to it, for it is not my ideal in the least. All my sympathies are with the patriarchal position where Church and State work hand in hand. But that has become impossible, not only by reason of the growing unbelief and indifference, but more perhaps from the pride and fanaticism of the Church, especially of the Roman Catholic Church. Since the Vatican Council it has been very difficult for the State to live in peace with the Church when they come into collision, and this should be avoided as much as possible. The Infallible Pope is, of course, the enemy to light and life, but I hope that real light and life will ultimately be victorious."

It had always been Abeken's special desire that genuine Christianity, in whatever Church it might be found, should be protected, or as he says of it: "That religion which is neither Protestant nor Romanism—but Christianity." In his youth his efforts were directed towards the bringing about a union between the Churches, in the hope of building up from the two as perfect a Church as was possible on earth. And in his age, he strove unweariedly for that genuine Christianity in the visible Church, which was in the invisible.

The death of Abeken's father-in-law brought another sorrow to him. The Kaiser wrote on April 24:—

"You have sent me very bad news. You know how long and how closely I have been associated with the Olfers family, and also with the Stägemanns, who used to be at the Radziwills a good deal. I have lately been able to render him who is gone, many a service at times when hostile currents met.

"The death of your father-in-law is indeed a release for him after his long and severe suffering, but the disappearance of such a distinguished man is a great loss to all who ever knew him, and I too, feel it deeply. But how much must the family

be moved who lose in him their head. The only comfort is to seek and find it where affliction comes. The widow and children know, and they will look for help from Him who rules our destinies.

"Tell them how deeply I feel for them. And I feel for you also. Your, WILHELM."

The months of severe strain at the seat of war could not fail to leave their mark.

The 12th and 13th of May were very full days for Abeken. On the 13th he went to an early sitting of a Commission and spoke for an hour, weakly and slowly in his own opinion, because he was not feeling well, but people who heard him said he spoke beautifully. He had interviews lasting several hours afterwards, and lastly made a report to Bismarck walking with him in the garden. He returned home late for dinner, and was called to Bismarck again.

On his return late that evening he found Herr Grimm whose conversation on art and literature was a relief and distraction to him after the day's work.

He rose on the 14th, but fell down at his bedroom door. It was a repetition of the stroke he had had at Ferrières, but this time it affected the heart, though he did not lose consciousness. His doctor considered his condition serious and suggested a consultation with Böger, for he was unwilling to assume sole responsibility of the case. This illness was a great trial to Abeken, for he had some important work to finish which seemed impossible to leave to another pen,<sup>1</sup> for he had received verbal instructions about it from Bismarck.

It referred to the struggle which was going on between the Church and State. The work lasted four hours, after that he lay down to rest. During the first days of his

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<sup>1</sup> "Bismarck's Pen," Abeken had been generally called. The Prince himself thought Abeken was able to get through as much work as any four men put together, and rarely had any one worked for him with the same pleasure as he. After his death Bismarck spoke of this in the Chamber on his resignation of the office as Minister-President in 1873. He said among other things: "I regard the Foreign Office as my special department, and in which I had the help of Geheimrath Abeken, and which I recall with pleasure. I have by degrees become convinced that it is quite impossible for me to oversee all this important work, for which I am responsible, in order to determine its details as fully as I ought to do."

illness he frequently asked whether this paper had been used. The struggle between Church and State occupied his mind a long time ; it seemed to him equally painful for both parties. The real "Kulturkampf" he did not live to see.

Böger did not conceal the danger from Abeken's wife. "A severe nervous fever would be preferable to this condition," he gently said.

During the first part of his illness numerous demands were made upon Abeken, partly by the Ministry and partly by those who had received a thousand civilities from him. The invalid felt obliged to wind up the threads of all the work which he held in his hand, until at last, he was unable to continue. There could scarcely have been more sympathy shown for any one than there was for him from all classes of society, both far and near. The Kaiser, Prince Karl, Prince Albrecht, Prince Georg, and others, and the greater part of the Diplomatic Corps sent every day to ask after him. Friends and relations vied with each other in giving proofs of most self-sacrificing affection, in their endeavour to preserve the precious life.

The doctors would not permit him to see visitors, and Abeken himself said to his wife, "I only wish you, and need no one else." She, therefore, by his desire, saw them all, and was, of course, the link between him and the outer world until the end. After those first days he once said to her, "It seems as if God had permitted me to live my life over again in these few days. Every fault rises up before me, and I feel more than I ever did that all the mercies which have been shown me throughout my life have come from Him, and that all the ills have been the result of my sins."

On May 21st the Kaiser sent Lauer, whom Abeken valued both as a friend and physician, to see him. "I cannot get well until I have seen Lauer," he declared, and in spite of all his sufferings, his face brightened when Lauer brought him the Kaiser's greetings. He was still hoping to accompany the Kaiser to Ems. On former occasions when he was asked whom he wished to accompany him, he used to write : "Abeken, of course."

Böger pronounced him to be out of danger on the 26th



Estern. 14. 8/72.

Ich erwidere Ihnen  
an Ihre, durch mich  
vermittelte, unmittelbare  
Forderung der Unterstützung  
an den Kaiser, werden Sie  
auf mich sehen, mit welcher  
Freude ich die Abnahme der  
Kriegskosten! Ich bin und  
werde ein Enthusiast, abgesehen  
von der Sache selbst, welche  
ich und so viel Gutes, Gutes  
Geistigung bezogen!

Diese Stellen zugeworfen liegen:  
Körper, stellen für eine, zwei,  
nach bestimmten Regeln so  
auf, es ist in dem Fall, und  
wunderlich in dem letzten  
Zusammenhang. In der ersten  
Zusammenhang. Kinder in  
Eins 1870, der ersten  
Zusammenhang. Zusammen  
auf stellen auf einen  
auf in dem letzten Zeit  
Nicht letzten Zusammenhang.

Gef. gedachte, so viel länger =  
gerber; leuchtst mir, mein  
mir und aufwachen!

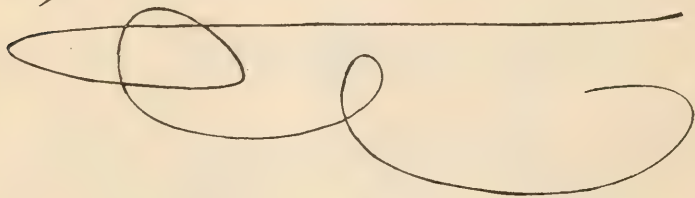
Reiz & gut begehrt ist, es  
Herr Reichenberg'sche und  
Herrn & ungerichtet sein  
wird, um mir selbst zu  
entdecken; wenig. Sie ist mir  
besser, um Herr in Herz  
sein zu können in der  
Folge.

Zwölfe Jahre

Herrn. Ungelassen  
Befehl

verw.

Wollen uns nicht in der Kunst  
Ihren Tugenden, den Pflichten für  
Ihrer Jugendzeit. Ich weiß  
nicht, ob es besser wäre  
als jetzt. Ich weiß die  
Wahrheit. Ihre Tugenden  
sind unerschütterlich. Ich  
weiß, die Kunst ist  
nicht zu lernen!





of May, and even said he hoped his recovery would be more rapid than he had at first thought possible.

"I am glad," said Abeken to his wife, "that God permits me to live a little longer," and his old, sunny smile lighted up the face which still bore traces of his severe illness. "Life with you is very beautiful. I have had a great deal of happiness in life, and how fortunate I have been in having so much intercourse with the Kaiser. Perhaps we may yet be able to go to Ems with him."

His faithful friends, Keudell and Grimm came to see him nearly every day, bringing him bright and interesting news from the world outside. Usedom also often came. His wife had to keep up a constant correspondence with distant friends, and she read him such affectionate letters as he was able to hear. One from the highly honoured and much-loved Grand Duke of Baden, he whom Abeken called "A pearl among princes," gave him special pleasure.

"Highly valued Herr Geheimer Legationsrath Abeken,— You will be sure to like to have an old acquaintance come to see you and tell you how sincerely he feels for you in your illness.

"I do not intend to ask questions requiring answers, I only wish to inquire after you from some sure pen, perhaps that of your doctor.

"We have lived through so much together that you will understand how much I wish to know what has taken you from the work which has such need of you.

"I heartily wish you may soon be entirely restored to health, and I trust the letter I look forward to receiving, will begin with this prospect. With sincerest wishes, I remain your grateful and faithful,

FRIEDRICH, GRAND DUKE OF BADEN.

"KARLSRUHE, *June 1, 1872.*"

Real improvement began on June 30. It seemed as if nature had at last been able to recover, and he could even walk. The melancholy expression disappeared, and the old happy look was again seen on his countenance. But another illness lay within, the germ of which meant the complete breaking up of his bodily health. He was attacked by a bronchial inflammation at the beginning of July, so that even he saw that he must give up the journey with the Kaiser, which he did with deep sorrow.

Prince Georg sent him an invitation to walk in his garden, but unfortunately he was no longer able to go. He longed for air and light, and he hoped to enjoy the rich beauties of nature and art which adorned that little corner of the world making it indeed a veritable bit of fairyland.

He enjoyed the pictures and flowers which friends sometimes sent, especially the flowers from Dresden, and he had a rose always by his bedside. He was able to speak less and less as the days went on, but he begged his wife to sit at his side, when she would talk of things which usually interested him. But at last he ceased to wish to hear anything except about those for whom he cared most. He was released from his sufferings on August 8th, torn from the fulness of life and love and the work he cared for.

A warrior of God lay there with a heavenly smile on his face. A victor who had won great peace, and his face spoke not of death, but of resurrection, and of life.

On the afternoon of his death the Kaiser telegraphed from Gastein to his wife—

“I received the sad message with the deepest sorrow! Your husband was with me as one of my most trusted councillors at so many grave crises of life, that his loss is irreparable. The whole country loses in him one of the truest and noblest men and officials. May God give you strength and resignation to bear His will.—WILHELM.”

The Kaiserin telegraphed from Coblenz—

“I must express my deep sympathy with you at once. Your happiness has come to an unexpected end, and the Kaiser and the country are deprived of a faithful and highly gifted servant. May God support and comfort you.—KAISERIN KÖNIGIN.”

A little later the Kaiser wrote to Frau von Olfers—

“GASTEIN, *August 14, 1872.*

“You will have already seen from my telegram to your widowed daughter, sent immediately after I received the sad news of Abeken's death, with what pain I learned it. Seldom has there been a purer, more faithful or more capable servant to the State, nor one who was so gifted in mind and heart and spirit.

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" Those rarely united qualities placed him very close to me and in my confidence, so that I constantly found him, particularly of late years, and in those decisive hours and days at Ems in '70,

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Prince Georg sent him an invitation to walk in his garden, but unfortunately he was no longer able to go. He longed for air and light and he hoped to enjoy the rich beauties of the woods.

He enjoyed his times so much that he had a room less and he used to sit at his desk usually in the evening to hear any news most. He was torn from his room and cared for.

A war had changed his face. He spoke not of his past.

On the 1st of August from Gast

"I received from my husband word that so many years ago the whole country and official life bear His Majesty's

The King

"I must have been happy in the country. May God send me

A little

"You know, I was widowed during the war, and I received the sad news of Abeken's death, with what pain I learned it. Seldom has there been a purer, more faithful or more capable servant to the State, nor one who was so gifted in mind and heart and spirit.



“ Those rarely united qualities placed him very close to me and in my confidence, so that I constantly found him, particularly of late years, and in those decisive hours and days at Ems in '70, a wise and trustworthy adviser. That Abeken thought of me lately, especially in his last days, has touched me deeply and proves how well we understood one another.

“ I understand only too well how prostrate your daughter must be after all her nursing and sorrow, for her to answer my letter herself. I hope she will take care of herself so that she may be, with her sisters, a comfort to you. Dear Madam, I am your faithful

WILHELM.

“ I have received your daughter's letter, telling me of her sorrow, and that Abeken often thought of me. May I ask you to thank her for her letter, which is a mournful pleasure to me ? ”

There were many flowers on Abeken's coffin during the few days in which it remained in the house of his death, especially those he loved best—roses, red and white, and with them three large palm leaves from plants, the seeds of which he had brought with him from the East.

A simple green mound covers his grave, and beneath his name on the grey stone at his head is the favourite text of his forefathers :

“ I will not leave Thee till Thou bless me.”



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